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THE LOVE of the SACRED HEART

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Die 23 *Oct*, 1919.

The Love of the Sacred Heart

Illustrated by

ST. MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE
& THE BLESSED JOHN EUDES

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FOREWORD

"I CAME to cast fire on the earth," says our divine Saviour, "and what will I but that it be enkindled." It is with the sole view of furthering that earnest desire of her divine Master that a Religious of the Good Shepherd has translated this book on the devotion to the Sacred Heart. In it we see how love for the Sacred Heart has been the inspiration of great men and women in all times and in many nations from the beginning of the Church until now. They have seen that "in Him was the Life and the Life was the Light of men," and to acquire the spirit that animated that Life has been the object of their intense desire and lifelong devotion. And they have found that spirit in the meekest and humblest heart that ever beat in human breast—the Heart of the Son of God. To that Heart they dedicated their lives and by Its promptings they wrought the wonderful works of God. Others have done works too—mightier in the world's estimation than theirs, works that held the world in awe and have justly merited for themselves the praise and undying gratitude of mankind—and in this perhaps they have received their reward. But these holy ones of the Sacred Heart have cared little for immediate results, for worldly success, and nothing at all for the applause and admiration of men. What they did care for was that their work should be done for God and in the manner God willed them to do it. Through Him and in Him it has been their one desire to work—and it is He who has been their reward exceeding great. To live in union with the Sacred Heart, to acquire Its Spirit, has been the end of all their striving. They did not aim at union with God that they might do external works well—but they did their external works well and holily that they might acquire a closer

union with God and His Sacred Heart. And it is in this that they are to be our models. Great external works, or the marvellous visitations of God in visions, ecstasies and colloquies, may not be for us, nor need we be troubled or anxious about them; but one thing *is* necessary, the acquiring, or at least the striving (according to the grace that is given us) to acquire, the Spirit of Christ. That we must do or perish. "If a man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His."

And in this book we shall find the means of acquiring that Spirit. Here Christ Himself becomes our Teacher. Whatever be our character or disposition or temperament, we shall find lessons of divine Wisdom addressed to souls similar to our own. Souls with *our* wants, with *our* difficulties, with *our* aspirations and desires, are here warned, comforted, corrected or encouraged by the very words of Christ Himself. They listened to those words and profited by them, and acquired the Spirit of Christ. *Quod isti et istæ cur non ego?* "What these holy men and women have done, why not I?"

That the mind to conceive such a sentiment may be in you and me is, I know, the one desire of the writer. For it is then that divine Love begins to be enkindled in the soul, and the work was undertaken for no other purpose.

The book comes to us from a bed of prolonged and weary suffering, and so is signed with the cross of Christ. In that sign may it conquer. May it win a way into our souls for that Sacred Heart with the cross that surmounts It, the thorns that encircle It, and the cruel wound that pierces It. For once the Sacred Heart comes to Its own and Its own receives It, the soul is safe for God.

From the cross that surmounts It and the flames of love that soar upwards to embrace the cross, the soul will learn the lesson of accepting with loyal courage the will of the Heavenly Father and of cheerful submission

to that will even to the death of the cross; the thorns will teach it the restraint of the concupiscence of the eyes and the concupiscence of the flesh; and the wound, the cruel wound which its own sins have made, to bear wrongs patiently and to forgive the offender. Thus the kingdom of the world with its pride, sensuality and selfishness will be driven out by Him who overcame the world, the Kingdom of God established within the soul, and the Sacred Heart enthroned in it for ever. Now a soul thus sanctified by the enthronement of the Sacred Heart must ever be the means of spreading abroad the sweet odour of Christ and preaching the Gospel of peace to its neighbours. It was so in the beginning amongst the early Christians: there were not many wise, not many noble, not many mighty, but they had sanctified the Lord Jesus in their hearts, and their life was the light of the world. It took some time to do it. But they did do it at last. They won the pagan world to God. And they did it not by human means or great natural talents but by living up to their Faith. "And this is the Victory which overcometh the world, your Faith."

And the war-wracked world of to-day has to be re-won to God. And Jesus is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. His methods do not change. "His wisdom reacheth from end to end mightily and disposes all things sweetly." He rules over the hearts of men mightily, as only the God who made the heart has any right to do, but He gains His Kingdom by disposing all things sweetly in the meekness of His Sacred Heart. He is not in the whirlwind or the tempest. *Cum magna reverentia disponit nos Deus:* "With great reverence doth God treat us." Thy King cometh to thee meek. He does not force His way by violence: "Behold I stand at the door and knock." He deigns to seek admission. Come, Lord Jesus, let us say to Him.

Could He but gain admission into our individual

souls and reign there as completely as He reigned in the hearts of those whose words and deeds are here recorded, how easily would He win to Himself the hearts of those about us.

By a solemn act His Holiness Leo XIII. dedicated the whole world to the Sacred Heart. It belongs to Him, then. The hearts of those about me are His, and He would gain possession of them through me. This surely is a solemn thought. In my own small place and in my own short day I can speed the advent of God's Kingdom on earth.

"Know your vocation," says St. Paul to the early Christians. Let us try to know and realize ours—for it is the same as theirs—to win the world to God. If anything our task is easier. We have the same Jesus to help us as they had: we have the same Faith to know and trust Him as they had. But we have this advantage, the world has heard of Christ—the world is consecrated to His Sacred Heart. Did we but make use of the power that is in us as they did, we too might have certain hope of victory.

May this book encourage us to realize and use our power, to know what the Sacred Heart might do for us and with us if we but really enthroned It in our souls. Then might we trust that we, like them, should bring to a world sitting in darkness and the shadow of death the glad tidings of God's peace, the news of salvation, and win that world to God. Oh, the wonder and beauty of our vocation!

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings and that preacheth peace, of him that showeth forth good, that preacheth salvation, that saith to Sion—Thy God shall reign.

J. A. McMULLEN, C.SS.R.

St. Joseph's,
Bishop's Stortford,
Herts.

CONTENTS

PAGE

FOREWORD. BY THE VERY REV. J. A. McMULLEN, C.SS.R. v

INTRODUCTION: THE DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART IN THE CHURCH. ST. MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE xiii

BOOK I

PART I

CHAPTER

I. THE DEVOTION LEADS TO OTHER VIRTUES - - 3

II. THE CHOICE OF VIRTUES - - - - 6

III. THE TWO FAVOURITE VIRTUES OF THE SACRED HEART 8

IV. ON HUMILITY - - - - - 10

V. HUMILITY REFERS ALL TO THE SACRED HEART - 12

VI. HUMILITY MAKES US LOVE ABJECTION - - 19

VII. MEEKNESS - - - - - - 21

VIII. SELF-FORGETFULNESS - - - - 24

IX. FRIENDSHIP OF THE SACRED HEART - - - 28

X. PURITY OF INTENTION - - - - 32

XI. SELF-DENIAL - - - - - 37

XII. MORTIFICATION - - - - - 39

XIII. CONFIDENCE - - - - - 42

PART II

I. THE SACRED HEART AND THE RELIGIOUS LIFE - 47

II. A RELIGIOUS MUST BE CLOSELY UNITED TO HER SPOUSE 49

III. A RELIGIOUS MUST BE LIKE HER SPOUSE - - 54

CHAPTER PAGE

IV. OBEDIENCE - - - - - - 57
V. PUNISHMENT OF DISOBEDIENCE - - - 59
VI. OBSERVANCE OF RULE - - - - 62
VII. CHARITY - - - - - - 64
VIII. CONSTANCY - - - - - - 67
IX. THE BETROTHED OF THE SACRED HEART - - 71
X. MARGARET MARY'S FAREWELL TO HER NOVICES - 72

PART III

ADVICE IN SUFFERING AND TEMPTATION - - 77

SECTION I.—ON SUFFERING

I. THE SCIENCE OF SUFFERING - - - - 78
II. WE MUST BE RESIGNED TO SUFFER - - - 81
III. THE SACRED HEART OUR STRENGTH - - - 85
IV. WE MUST LOVE SUFFERING - - - - 90
V. SUFFERING IN UNION WITH THE SACRED HEART - 95
VI. THE THREE DESIRES - - - - - 101
VII. LOVE OF PERSECUTORS - - - - 104
VIII. IGNORE WORLDLY TALK - - - - 107

SECTION II.—ON TEMPTATION - 108

IX. THE TREATMENT OF TEMPTATION - - - 112
X. TEMPTATIONS SMALL AND GREAT - - - 113
XI. PATIENCE IN TEMPTATION - - - - 114
XII. VIGILANCE AND CONFIDENCE - - - 115
XIII. SPIRITUAL ARIDITY - - - - - 117
XIV. DRYNESS OFTEN ADVANTAGEOUS - - - 119
XV. THE CAUSE OF ARIDITY - - - - 123
XVI. WEARINESS - - - - - - 127

NOTES

PAGE

I. INVITATION TO PERSEVERE TO THE END IN DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART - - - - 130

II. ACT OF CONSECRATION - - - - 132

III. ST. MARGARET MARY'S MESSAGE - - - 133

IV. THE ENTHRONEMENT OF THE SACRED HEART IN FAMILIES - - - - - - 135

BOOK II

Blessed John Eudes

CHAPTER

I. LIFE AND MISSION OF BLESSED JOHN EUDES - - 141

II. FATHER EUDES' MISSION AND CHARACTER - - 148

III. IMPORTANCE OF BLESSED JOHN EUDES' MISSION AND HOW IT COMPLETES THAT OF ST. MARGARET MARY - 153

IV. BLESSED JOHN EUDES GOES TO THE HEART OF JESUS THROUGH THE HEART OF MARY - - - 155

V. THE APOSTLESHIP OF BLESSED JOHN EUDES - - 157

VI. HIS TWO CONGREGATIONS - - - - 159

VII. HIS MISSIONS AND SPIRITUAL DIRECTION - - 166

VIII. THE FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS - - 170

IX. JESUS, MARY, JOSEPH.—CONTRACT OF ALLIANCE WITH THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN MOTHER OF GOD - 172

X. DEATH OF FATHER EUDES - - - - 184

XI. HIS WRITINGS ON THE SACRED HEART - - 190

INTRODUCTION

THE DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART IN THE CHURCH

FROM the lifetime of St. Mechtilde and Gertrude to those of Bl. John Eudes and St. Margaret Mary, three centuries were to pass. But from the time she lived, the *Herald of Divine Love* foretold the Sacred Heart's reign, and the *Book of Special Grace* offered it to privileged souls. In this way the devotion became, with the works of the Virgin of Helfta, the precious inheritance of the Sons of St. Benedict. Thanks to the zeal of the devout Lansperge, the editor of St. Gertrude's writings, the devotion flourished among the Carthusians. From the beginning of the fourteenth century the Dominicans caused St. Mechtilde's writings to be known in Italy, and a great number among them spread devotion to the love of the Sacred Heart, principally Tauler, Henry Suso, Louis of Grenada, to whose names we may add those of St. Catherine of Siena, St. Catherine de Ricci and St. Rose of Lima.

The Franciscan family has also its list of Saints devoted to the Sacred Heart. At the head we find St. Bonaventure, the seraphic doctor, then comes Urban of Casal, St. Bernadine of Siena, St. Catherine of Bologna, the Bl. Baptist Vorani, Bl. Angela of Foligno and St. Catherine of Genoa.

The Fathers of the Society of Jesus found predecessors to Bl. F. Colombière in St. Ignatius, their glorious Founder; in St. Aloysius, the patron of youth; in Suarez, the greatest of their theologians; and in Fr. Cansius, the valiant warrior for the Roman Faith.

The religious of the Visitation have also shown that

St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane Frances de Chantal were privileged friends of the Sacred Heart, and that, through divine inspiration, they had established their Order to foster and increase the devotion. From the thirteenth to the seventeenth century it is therefore easy to trace a continual line of light and love from the Sacred Heart.

But the time foretold by St. John had come. The world had grown cold. The devotion destined to rekindle in it the fire of divine love now ceases to be the exclusive privilege of saints, it will be for all: *Quod erit omni populo* It is the flame that is to enkindle the whole world. In order to realize this great design Almighty God deigned to use two persons: the Bl. John Eudes and St. Margaret Mary. Both consecrated all their zeal, all their strength, and all their lives to making the Sacred Heart known and loved. Father Eudes preaches it at first in Normandy and Brittany. Margaret Mary spreads it in Burgundy. The Church has by its sovereign authority sanctioned both the devotion preached by Bl. John Eudes and that revealed by St. Margaret Mary. Is there any difference between the doctrine on the Sacred Heart based on tradition and preached by Bl. John Eudes and that which St. Margaret Mary beheld in the rapture of ecstasy? Several writers have erroneously thought there was. The difference is only in appearance. The Sacred Heart preached by Bl. John Eudes is the same Sacred Heart as that revealed to St. Margaret Mary, as it is the same Sacred Heart so loved by St. Gertrude and St. Mechtilde. It was the mission of St. Benedict's daughters to show us the Sacred Heart, especially in Its co-operation with the Father, that of Bl. John Eudes shows it to us in union with Mary His Mother, and St. Margaret Mary as surrounded with a crown of thorns, signifying our ingratitude. A deep study of the writings of these friends of the Sacred Heart discloses to us the unity of their doctrine. The Christ of David and Isaias is the same as that of St. John

and St. Paul, and yet each has his own way of loving Him without there being any dividing of Christ: *Numquid Christus divisus est?* In the same way the apostles of the Sacred Heart reveal It to us entire, each in his own way.

A characteristic found in each of these apostles is the fear they felt of their mission, each striving to lower themselves in their own nothingness. It would be foolish to try to magnify one at the expense of the other. Whatever may be said about them, men have not to choose between two devotions; they have their burning words to listen to, a doctrine to understand and virtues to imitate, particularly the meekness and humility of the Sacred Heart.

In this apostleship common to the four Evangelists of the Sacred Heart Bl. John Eudes has his mission distinct, original and apart from the others. It is our business only to state this without asking Our Lord why He gave this mission to a missionary and that to a nun hidden in her Convent. He is Master of His gifts.

BOOK I

ST. MARGARET MARY

The Love of the Sacred Heart

Part I

CHAPTER I

THE DEVOTION LEADS TO THE PRACTICE OF OTHER VIRTUES

THE queen bee never leaves the hive without being surrounded by her subjects. Charity never enters a heart except as queen, followed by all the other virtues, which she arranges according to their rank and causes to act according to their functions, as a captain directs his soldiers. But she does not cause them to act at once, nor all in the same way, nor always and in every place. The just man is like a tree planted by the running waters bearing his fruit at the right time, for charity "directing his actions causes him to perform many good works which are the fruits of virtues, but each one at the right time and place" (*Introduction to a Devout Life*).

Devotion to the Sacred Heart, being the beautiful flower of charity, must produce the same fruits of virtue. It is not a devotion of feelings or words, but of actions; not only of prayers, but of conformity with the virtues of the divine Heart. Oh! how much ignorance and delusion on this essential point! St. Margaret Mary said to her novices: "Do not flatter yourselves, for if your names are written in this adorable Heart it is as yet only with ink, which signifies the beginning of grace

in you which is given to enable you to fight and overcome your imperfections, above all, this proud self-love which is manifest in all, and spoils and destroys our most holy actions. That is the beginning signified by the black letters, which must be brightened and purified as gold in the furnace. In the same way our inclinations and actions must be purified in the furnace of His love from all that is earthly and human, and the seeking of our own interests. And when, having made some progress, everything is changed and like silver, which denotes purity of soul, the work must not then be left imperfect; the letters must be of gold, which makes your names ineffaceable. And you will then be as holocausts entirely consumed in the flames of the loving Heart of Jesus.

"But it is only love that will lead you to this. We must suffer, love always doing violence to ourselves, mortifying and humbling ourselves through love and being very happy when we find occasions to testify thus our love for the Beloved. All that I have just said applies to the beginning, progress, and end of our lives. The crown will not be given to beginners nor to those who have only made some progress, but to the victors who have persevered to the end.

"And when you commit faults of pride or self-love, either in excusing yourselves or in any other way, or when you have done to others what you would not wish done to yourself either in word or action, you cause the flowers of your crown to wither and you take away their perfume. And when you try to win for yourself the esteem and friendship of others, as often as you do it wilfully, it would be as though you took so many letters from the writing of this adorable Heart to stamp them on the hearts of creatures. And when you neglect one of the observances it is as if you threw mud on It, also when you willingly entertain thoughts of uncharitableness or resentment against anyone.

"My dear Sisters, I cannot sufficiently praise the Sacred Heart for Its goodness and liberality towards you; Our Lord seems to bring out all His treasures with which to enrich you, so much does He rejoice in blessing you, but I cannot explain myself further except in saying that you owe Him much. But if after all this you should relax and become weary of the fidelity which He exacts and you have promised, I believe that He will be very severe in punishing you for your ingratitude. Take care, I often warn you, but if this should happen I should then be against you. And as love seeks for some return and will have no other than this same love, God has filled your hearts so that you can grant Him what He desires. This love should impress on our hearts the love of our Beloved, which may be done in this way:

"When you have overcome some evil inclination in yourself either by humility, mortification or any other virtue, or you have done some real act of charity for others in bearing and supporting their defects, in praising or doing them some service, these acts will be so many letters of this adorable name that you will imprint on your heart. But be faithful, constant and fervent; I could not beg you to be so too often, for great harm would come to you otherwise. I sometimes say to you more than I intend, but may Our Lord be blessed for all and His Sacred Heart loved, praised and glorified eternally. Amen."

Is not this instruction a good list of the virtues exacted from all by the Sacred Heart?

CHAPTER II

THE CHOICE OF VIRTUES

"COMETS generally appear to us to be larger than stars, although they are not to be compared to them in size. They appear so to us only because they are nearer to us. There are also virtues which in the eyes of commonplace people seem great and are always preferred by them, but this is only because these virtues being nearer to them and falling under the knowledge of their senses are more in accord with their ideas, which are very worldly. So we see people generally prefer corporal to spiritual almsgiving, disciplines, fasts, watching and all the austerities that can be performed by the body, to sweetness, kindness, modesty and the other mortifications of the mind and heart which are nevertheless more excellent and of greater merit. Therefore, Philothée, choose the best, and not those esteemed the most; those that are really great and not those only apparently so; the most solid and not those that only seem beautiful" (*Introduction to a Devout Life*).

This is what St. Margaret Mary wished for herself. "O my only Love, why dost Thou not leave me in the ordinary way? Give Thy precious graces to those holy souls who will glorify Thee more than I do, who only resist Thee. I only wish for Thy Cross and Thy holy love." This was what she wished for all those who gave themselves to the Sacred Heart. Her counsels always led them to prefer the ordinary virtues: patience under trial, humility, sweetness, fidelity to duty, perfect detachment from all things and entire abandonment to the Sacred Heart. "I believe that the Sacred Heart asks three things from you: First that you love Him with a love of preference which will enable you to overcome

your repugnances and trample on all human respect. 'What will they say if I perform this act of virtue?' This must always be contemned when it is a question of pleasing the divine Heart. Secondly, you must despise, judge and condemn no one but yourselves; in this way you will practise charity and humility, and you will escape condemnation from your Judge. The third thing is that you place all your satisfaction in pleasing Him so that He may find His delight in you. He wishes you to copy the virtues of His divine Heart. And if you knew how much you displease Him when you fail in charity or humility or when, through cowardice, you close your eyes to the light He gives you to draw you from dissipation and self-seeking! All this grieves Him much and prevents Him bestowing more abundant graces on you. I believe I have said all this to you before, but He wishes that I should again recommend it to you, for it seems to me that He will not give you any new practices at present, but you will please and rejoice His Heart if you attend to those you have. Try therefore to correspond to His love in giving Him yours entirely by an exact and faithful observance of all our rules, renouncing all curiosity, being neither astonished nor discouraged at difficulties, but possessing your souls in peace without complaining of anything, finding all your satisfaction in annihilating yourselves. If you really love, nothing will be difficult."

Such are the virtues St. Margaret Mary asks from the true disciples of the Sacred Heart.

Before all, the love of Jesus; love of preference which sacrifices to Him the repugnances of nature and the false shame of human respect. Love of complaisance which only seeks happiness in Him. Love of imitation which causes us to copy His virtues—charity, humility, unselfishness, observance of rule, confidence through all, detachment and rest in the love of the divine Heart.

CHAPTER III

THE TWO FAVOURITE VIRTUES OF THE SACRED HEART

THE holy Chrism which by apostolic tradition is used in the Church of God for the Sacrament of Confirmation and at other times is composed of olive oil and balm, which among other significations represent sweetness and humility—two virtues very dear to the Sacred Heart, and which Our Lord has so strongly recommended to us, saying: 'Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of Heart'; as though He would have our hearts entirely consecrated to His service and wholly applied to the imitation of His life by love of these two virtues. Humility perfects man in the performance of his duty to God and meekness in his relations with others. Balm, which sinks below other liquids, represents humility; olive oil, which is always on the surface, represents meekness, which raises man above all troubles and excels all other virtues because it is the flower of charity, which, says St. Bernard, is only in its perfection when it is united with sweetness and penance.

"But understand well, Philothée, that this mystical chrism composed of sweetness and humility should be in your heart, for it is one of the devil's great ruses to amuse people with appearances. And in reality how many have only the language, behaviour and external manner of the virtues, and, not examining well their interior dispositions, think they are humble and meek when they are not! This is seen when, notwithstanding their apparent humility and ceremonious meekness, they become angry with incredible warmth and pride for a slight injury that may have been done them or for an insulting word.

"Real humility and sincere meekness are excellent safeguards for the soul against the swelling of the spirit and heat of the heart which contradictions generally excite; as they say of those who have been stung or bitten by vipers that their wounds do not swell when they have taken the antidote vulgarly called 'the grace of St. Paul.' But if when stung by detraction, which has a serpent's tongue, our spirit swells with pride and our heart is burning, let us not doubt that it is a sure sign that our humility and meekness are neither true nor sincere but false and only apparent" (*Introduction to a Devout Life*). St. Margaret Mary was careful to profit by the lessons given by her holy Founder.

"If you wish to be a disciple and daughter of the Sacred Heart you must submit to Its holy teaching and become like It, meek and humble, meek in bearing little annoyances, the peculiarities and troublesome ways of your neighbour, without being vexed by the little contradictions you meet with from him, but instead, doing for him all the good services you can, for in that you will find the means of pleasing the Sacred Heart. We must be meek not only by being undisturbed by events contrary to our inclinations, but also by faults committed; and, further, never excuse ourselves, since our divine Lord did not do so during His Passion; never seek to be praised or esteemed by others, reject all thoughts of this that might present themselves to you. Rejoice when you are forgotten or despised, for this will cause the loving Heart of Jesus to reign in yours, and humble yourself and allow yourself to be humbled by others in peace. When it is possible, choose for yourself whatever is worst and most repugnant to nature, which you must thwart, as far as you can."

CHAPTER IV

ON HUMILITY

"HUMILITY tends to perfect our behaviour towards God," says St. Francis de Sales. That is to say that it causes us to take our right place before His divine Majesty. He is who is, and the creature is he who is not. The Sacred Heart desires that Its disciples should have a great knowledge of their nothingness and abjection.

Our Lord once said to St. Margaret Mary, in a very authoritative tone of voice: "I will make thee so poor, vile and abject in thy own eyes, I will so annihilate thee even in the thoughts of thy own heart, that I shall be able to raise Myself on this nothingness." "These words affected me so much that I could not think of them without feeling horrified, for I saw so much misery in myself, I could not understand how others bore with me, so destitute of all good did I think myself. I feared so much that God's gifts would gain me the esteem of others, who often praise what is worthy of blame, that I should have preferred being deprived of them, and I feared less the fury of hell than praise which introduces a secret poison into the heart that gradually kills it, unless God in His goodness applies to it the antidote of humiliation." And yet, one day, the humble Margaret Mary yielded to a feeling of vanity in speaking of herself; this light fault brought on her a severe correction. "What art thou, dust and ashes," said her Beloved—"what art thou, and of what dost thou boast, since of thyself thou hast nothing but misery and nothingness? So that the greatness of My gifts should never make thee forget thyself and what thou art, I will place a picture before thy eyes." At once she saw a horrible painting

in which was depicted, in part, what she was. What surprised her most and gave her a great horror of herself, so that, if the divine Goodness had not sustained her she would have fainted with sorrow, was that she had not been precipitated into hell; this was only through an excess of God's great mercy. As this picture was the penance with which Our Lord punished in her the smallest feeling of vanity, she was afterwards obliged to say to Him: "O my God, let me die or hide the picture, I cannot live and see it." It caused in her great feelings of hatred and vengeance against herself. Obedience not allowing her to execute the austerities it suggested to her, and not daring to disobey, she tried to compensate by a faithful accusation of her faults in the most humiliating way possible, exaggerating them so much that from little imperfections they appeared great faults and deserving of penance.

"I will make thee so poor, vile and abject in thy own eyes, and I will annihilate thee, even in the thoughts of thy own heart, that I may raise Myself on this nothingness." Never was prophecy more literally fulfilled. St. Margaret Mary says: "I felt myself sinking into the abyss of my nothingness from which I never came out, even out of respect and homage to His Greatness, before whom I should have wished to be continually prostrate on the ground or on my knees."

This was the posture she was always found in as far as her work and illnesses allowed; her Spouse leaving her no rest in any other posture less respectful. She scarcely dared take a seat except when with the Community or in the presence of others, so penetrated was she with the remembrance of her own vileness that she seemed full of confusion and wished that no one should remember her, except to despise and humble her, thinking she deserved nothing else, which gave the sweetest satisfaction to her heart and the best nourishment to her soul.

CHAPTER V

HUMILITY REFERS ALL TO THE SACRED HEART

HUMILITY rejoices in the knowledge of our own nothingness, but it does not disregard God's gifts; on the contrary, it appreciates and profits by them.

Many cannot and will not think of the particular graces God has given them, fearing that they might yield to vanity and so rob Him of His glory. This is a foolish fear and a real error, for since the consideration of God's gifts leads us to love Him, as the angelic Doctor teaches, the more we know Him the more we shall love Him. And as our hearts are more touched by particular gifts than by those that are general, it is these former we must most consider.

Nothing can more humble us in presence of God's mercy than the multitude of His graces, and in presence of His justice than the multitude of our sins. Let us therefore attentively consider what He has done for us, and what we have done against Him. As we try to find out our sins in detail let us also examine in detail the graces God has granted to us, and in this way we need not be afraid that the enumeration of them will cause pride to spring up in our hearts, provided we remember that what we have of good does not come from ourselves. Alas! are not mules heavy and offensive beasts, though they may be laden with precious and scented goods belonging to the prince? What have we of good that we have not received, why should we glory?

On the contrary, the consideration of God's graces ought to make us more humble, since the knowledge of having received a benefit ought naturally to produce

gratitude; but if this consideration inflames our heart with vainglory, the infallible remedy is the remembrance of our ingratitude, imperfections and misery. If we think well of what we have done when God was not helping us, we shall know well that what we do when He is with us is not our work. In reality we rejoice in the good He has given us, and we even rejoice that we have it, but we glorify God only, for He is the Author. In this way the Bl. Virgin proclaims that God has done great things in her, and she only proclaims it for her own humiliation and God's glory. "My soul doth magnify the Lord, for He has done great things unto me."

According to the testimony of her Superiors, the more graces and blessings St. Margaret Mary received the more she humbled and mortified herself. Often, feeling ashamed of her unworthiness, she prayed Our Lord, in imitation of St. Peter, to depart from her, for she was a sinner, and according to her judgment the greatest on the face of the earth. She appreciated God's gifts to her, but she was also able to see her own infidelities, and, although she had rested so often on the Sacred Heart, she trembled at the thought of her salvation being in peril as might any ordinary sinner. She was seized with fear, and Our Lord was obliged to reassure her. She had been assured that the graces she received were given to her to be distributed to others, which made her fear that after having served as a channel for these graces she might herself be lost. She thought she deserved this richly. But one day Our Lord consoled her by these words: "I am thy guarantee and I have paid all for thee."

To console His spouse Our Lord speaks to her as though she were the worst of sinners.

When she was obliged to explain the graces she had received she was covered with confusion. She only did it through obedience. "I do it therefore to obey you, but the great difficulty I feel in doing so

will prevent me doing it well, unless you encourage me: I feel I am committing a great crime in speaking of myself, seeing how sinful, weak and miserable I am. I am often astonished that the earth does not open and engulf me on account of my great sins. I beg of you to entreat Our Lord that I may live and die with Him on the cross, poor, unknown, despised and forgotten by all, weighed down by all kinds of suffering, according to His will and choice and not mine."

Humility of St. Margaret Mary in accepting her Mission.

"Elias said to the poor widow woman, 'Borrow or take by force empty vessels and pour the oil into them.' In order to receive the grace of God into our souls they must be empty of self-seeking" (*Introduction to a Devout Life*). This advice is still more applicable to those who have received a special mission from God.

The mission given to St. Margaret Mary was the greatest Our Lord could bestow on a creature. He had chosen her to be His messenger to the Christian people, and the apostle of His Sacred Heart. Far from taking pride from so high a vocation, Margaret Mary found means of humbling herself yet lower and of satisfying her thirst for confusion and contempt.

Our Lord said to her: "I have chosen thee as an abyss of ignorance and unworthiness." Margaret Mary never betrayed her Master by thinking anything of herself; in her own eyes she was always an abyss into which the Sacred Heart loved to look.

"I rejoice in the sweet thought that our loving Saviour, not being able to find anyone more poor, vile, weak or unworthy than myself, for this work which must give Him great glory, has chosen me with the intention of giving me all the necessary help.

"I feel great confusion in thinking that a great sinner such as I should possess the science of the Saints and speak their language. I acknowledge freely to you that when I have anything to do with an affair, troubles and contradictions are sure to arise."

And yet St. Margaret Mary knew she had her part to take in showing forth the treasures of the Sacred Heart. She defines it with humble simplicity as St. Francis de Sales might have done.

"Through His sovereign power Our Lord carries out His will even by means which, humanly speaking, would seem more likely to prove obstacles than helps to His designs. This being so, I look on myself as the mud placed on the eyes of the man born blind, which might be expected to do more harm than good."

On another occasion she sees her counterpart in Balaam's ass, which speaks without any right to be proud of it.

St. Margaret Mary's humility led her to think that she was an obstacle to the spread of the new devotion. "Let us work with all our strength, for, I say it sorrowfully, I am only a hindrance on account of the sinful life I have always led. This makes me sometimes wish to die so that this divine Heart might be more known, loved and glorified." This conviction instead of becoming weaker as the devotion spread, only grew stronger. "I shall certainly die this year," she said, "so that the great good that Our Saviour expects from a book on the Sacred Heart may not be frustrated."

Humility of St. Margaret Mary in her Work for the Sacred Heart.

St. Margaret Mary is a model of humility, and she can also teach it to her disciples. She shows them Jesus living in the Holy Eucharist and saying to them: "Learn of Me to be meek and humble of heart, otherwise you

cannot be loved as Its disciples by My Sacred Heart, which can only acknowledge you as such if you conform yourselves to Its teaching. Learn, then, a generous humility which will not allow you to despond at the sight of your faults and imperfections, but, on the contrary, after having humbled yourself you will commence to be again faithful." The Sacred Heart loves this manner of acting which keeps the soul in peace.

To become a disciple of the Sacred Heart, humility must be courageously practised. Humility is a safe road to Heaven. This road cannot be abandoned without losing the friendship of Our Lord. He will lift you up to Himself in proportion as He finds you annihilated in your own estimation. Do all for love, and with humility. You must offer yourself to Him as a nothing to its Creator. He will make you what He wishes you to be if you offer Him no resistance. Nothingness can be no foundation, yet it is on this nothingness that God wishes to erect the building of your perfection. This is why Margaret Mary adds: "Accept lovingly all that lowers you in the eyes of others, as most conducive and necessary for your perfection, for self-complacency is very dangerous. Therefore be glad when you are forgotten and despised. I beg of you to be very faithful in putting all this in practice, so that all we have said to you may not be to you a cause of condemnation, but of sanctification. You know that it costs much to practise virtue. But the pain lasts only a moment and the reward is eternal.

"Always be humble and ready for everything. Keep silence about what might draw on you the esteem of others, for Our Lord rejects what they praise and His Spirit rests on the humble of heart. Strive for this with all your strength, but if through weakness you should fail, do not be troubled, but humble yourself, because you are not humble.

"Keep yourself little and lowly in your own eyes, so that you may grow in likeness to this divine Heart. If only you understood the honour and grace that the King of Heaven does you in lowering Himself to enter your heart, where often perhaps you leave Him alone! But to make you enter into yourself He allows your plans to fail, so that you may know that satisfaction is not to be found in things that pass, but in Him alone. He wishes to be all things to you, and so desires that you should receive these humiliations as a sign that He expects you to enter into your heart, where you will find Him. He expects you to leave all and keep Him company in the way He shows you; either in adoring His Omnipotence by your weakness, leaving Him to act in you and by you, or by new humiliations that He will cause you to discover in yourself, which are steps to lead you down into the abyss of your own nothingness, so that He may find His delights in your heart—for this King of our hearts loves only hidden souls. To be entirely His we must be nothing in our own eyes. Consider, therefore, dear friend, this lowly route as the real one He has designed for you, and be sure you will attain unto Him. Go straight along the path with peace and thanksgiving, without caring about what you do or if you advance, but like a blind person, go on full of faith and confidence under the care of a loving Providence. Do not retrace your steps, for by taking too great care of yourself you hinder that which Our Lord would take of you to make you advance, without your perceiving it, more in a month than you would generally do in a year. And what can you fear in such a safe way as is that of humility, the best part of which is that we do not see it ourselves? For humility has this characteristic, that it disappears as soon as one sees it in oneself.

"But for courage to overcome self we must expect all our help from the Sacred Heart. We are only guilty,

proud nothings. Take to yourself these words: 'Unless you become as little children you shall not enter the kingdom of God.' I think this consists in making yourselves little by true humility of heart and simplicity of mind. I think that these two virtues will lead you to the perfection God requires from you. Humility will cause you to be annihilated in a complete forgetfulness and contempt of yourself, receiving willingly and as from a good Father the humiliations and contradictions you meet with, without looking for secondary causes. But above all consider His loving Heart, which will never allow His adorable Hand to send anything to you unless it is for His glory and your sanctification. Because of His love for you He will often send you the means of crucifying self, either by others or by yourself, but in whatever way it comes, receive it in silence and submission, saying, 'My Heavenly Father has sent this, and that is enough for me.'

"Follow the example of your crucified Spouse, who never sought His own glory but, in all, that of His Father. Henceforth may your glory be only in humiliations, saying when they happen: 'This is what I deserve, and not approbation and praise.'"

CHAPTER VI

HUMILITY MAKES US LOVE ABJECTION

MARGARET MARY, whose eyes were always raised to the Sacred Heart, our most perfect model of humility, urges us to love our own abjection. "The love of your own abjection consists in receiving and suffering in silence all the humiliations that the divine Master sends you without ever saying, 'It is enough,' no matter what repugnance nature may feel. Only one thing is really necessary for us, which is divine love, in the midst of our lowliness, abandoning ourselves to the loving Providence of the Sacred Heart so that He may govern and direct us according to His will. He will take great care to provide all that is necessary for your sanctification if only you strive to submit yourselves to His will.

"The love, therefore, of our dear abjection in union with Our Lord is enough even to honour the Mysteries of His Passion and Death, keeping holy silence as He did, in all the sufferings and humiliations that may befall you; for I acknowledge to you that nothing touches one so much as the holy silence which He kept so perfectly during the whole of His Passion. Let us after His example only pray for those who annoy us.

"You ask me which mystery of the Passion I have the most devotion to. I will reply simply, that after what I have already told you, it is the crucifixion—standing at the foot of the cross, so that I may unite myself to all that He does for us. But we ought always to place ourselves in His adorable Heart and never leave it, no matter what happens to us. It is a very strong and invulnerable fortress. Our Lord will never leave us, as I firmly hope and pray. But how grateful we ought to be to Our

Lord for conducting us by so sure a way as is that of humility, loving our own abjection. Let us not seek or desire anything more, for nothing will conduce more to our sanctification."

St. Margaret Mary calls the love of our own abjection the sure way to sanctity. Our proud nature rebels at being asked to walk in this way. It is necessary to insist, in order to convince it. Then a soul wishes to hide itself in the Sacred Heart as a statue in its niche, if there is no better means.

" The inspirations and good inclinations that you tell me you have on the subject of the kind of statue suitable to be placed in the Sacred Heart are so much the better as they teach you that you cannot attain to it unless by love you keep firmly in your own abjection. It is the only safe way for you, and I consider Our Lord has done you a great favour in granting you to see and desire it, for there is no more efficacious means of gaining and keeping the friendship of the Sacred Heart. It is a strong cordial which is able to give the life of grace to your soul and that of love to your heart, and so to influence all your good works. It is indeed the virtue of the Sacred Heart, and when we have said that we have said all. He only lowers His greatness to us in proportion as He finds us very lowly in our own eyes, and He will take care to raise you to union with Himself also in proportion as you withdraw your affections from all that attracts you to creatures or to yourself, in order to cherish lovingly the occasions of humiliations that He sends, either through others or from yourself; but try above all to profit by those that divine Providence sends, without reflecting on self, for it seems to me that that displeases Him."

CHAPTER VII

MEEKNESS

OUR dear Lord is humble of Heart and He is also meek and peaceful. As the prophet says of Him, "He shall not raise His voice, nor be heard in disputes and wranglings." When His enemies had taken Him prisoner He allowed Himself to be led to the cross as a lamb to the slaughter, without a complaint. Oh, if our poor hearts could only be plunged into the Heart of Jesus and be penetrated with this meekness as by some precious oil!

St. Francis de Sales made his dwelling in the Heart of Jesus, where his soul could not be disturbed even by the most important business. As Moses became the meekest of men by conversing familiarly with his God, so this great saint, by familiarity with His holy love, obtained in perfection the two virtues of the Sacred Heart—meekness and humility.

To St. Margaret Mary was granted the same grace. St. Francis's daughter, from her entrance into the Convent, was meek and gentle like her holy Father. When she had become penetrated with the graces from the Sacred Heart she became sweetness itself. One of the Sisters says of her: "I never heard her make a complaint nor noticed in her manner any coldness or vexation with anyone. On the contrary, I admired her disposition, which made her always as ready to be employed with those who disliked her as with those who showed her their friendship."

And yet Margaret Mary was distrusted by her Sisters. She was often misunderstood. What she said, either in explanation or in self-accusation, was badly received and badly interpreted. Sometimes she heard remarks which

to her sensitive character were exceedingly painful. She kept silence, smiled sweetly, and put in practice what she taught her novices.

" Be humble before God and meek towards your neighbour. Only judge yourself, excuse others. In speaking of God, praise and glorify Him, in speaking of your neighbour show your esteem, and do not speak of yourself at all, either well or ill."

Humility regulates our conduct towards God and meekness regulates it towards our neighbour.

Meekness will make us forbearing towards our neighbour, causing us to excuse and bear charitably and silently any little imperfections he may have. It will prevent us from ever arguing, showing our repugnances or dislikes; for meekness bears all without complaint.

" In this way you will enter the Sacred Heart in which, though weak, you will feel you are in a strong fortress, taking refuge there against your enemies who are within you and who would often trouble you by sadness or by any little difficulty that might present itself. But in the Sacred Heart you will find the strength not to despond nor to be troubled by anything, not even by your faults, for which we may humble ourselves, being well content that they should be known and that we should appear before others as we really are. The faithful practice of this will keep your soul in peace and make it God's throne."

If you ought to show more sweetness to some than to others, it ought to be towards those for whom you feel some aversion; be more kind and condescending towards them than towards others. Love those who try you, for they help more towards your perfection than do those who flatter and praise you.

But this condescension has its limits. Be patient and kind to others, but give them nothing that you owe to

the Heart of Jesus. Conform your will in all things to that of Our Lord.

The Sacred Heart does not wish us to sacrifice our will to that of our neighbour by a meekness that is not properly understood. But It exacts, without excuse, the sacrifice of our aversions. Margaret Mary, speaking of a person who seemed unwilling to make this sacrifice, assumes a threatening tone: "The hardness of her heart towards others will make Our Lord so indifferent towards her that not only will He refuse her the graces He had destined for her, but He will even withdraw from her those that are most necessary for salvation, leaving her to herself. To prevent this misfortune and to repair the faults she has committed she must do violence to herself in order to be re-united with this other soul, who must also, on her side, contribute with all her strength to this reconciliation so necessary for the salvation of both. The Sacred Heart will give them by His grace all the help they need, but they will obtain nothing without suffering for it. This is all I can say on this subject, for which I shall continue my poor prayers."

CHAPTER VIII

SELF-FORGETFULNESS

A TOO great attention to self is a defect very common among pious persons. This defect causes them even to forget Our Lord. Margaret Mary avoided this fault in herself and tried to warn those under her against it.

" I have no more care of myself nor of what Our Lord would deign to do with me and in me, for He has taught me that He will never refuse His care except when I interfere with it myself, which by my infidelity I have experienced by seeing all my plans fail. But I no longer think about myself except to do as He tells me."

St. Margaret Mary insisted on this self-forgetfulness, for our hearts are so small that if they love self they do not love Our Lord as they ought.

" We must love this adorable Heart, cost what it may, but pure love will have all or nothing. Do not therefore have any reserve with Him; let us give Him all that we are, not troubling about the future, nor reflecting on our selves and our own incapacity. He will carefully provide for all if we only allow Him. What do you fear in disputing with Him the entire sacrifice of your heart? It is already His, but He wishes to possess it alone, empty of all self and free, without attachment for anything, even if the object appears holy. When Our Lord deprives you of anything, be content and entirely conformed to His holy will, in poverty and in the absence of all pleasure, friends or consolation, talent and even virtue, remaining submissive in prayer and always doing His holy will. Let us rejoice when His will is found in the

annihilation of all that we are and of all our satisfactions. Our hearts are so little they cannot contain two loves, and being made only for divine love there is no rest when another love is added."

St. Margaret Mary saw with admirable clearness in the souls under her care this miserable preoccupation with self. " Do not occupy your minds in thinking about yourselves. I think this displeases Our Lord. It should be sufficient for you to have given Him the whole care of yourselves, and in proportion as you forget yourselves He will take quite a particular care of your perfection, purifying and sanctifying your souls. Again, look at God and not at yourselves. The more you separate yourselves from yourselves the nearer you will be to God.

" To forget self in order to serve God alone produces this virtue of simplicity with Our Lord and with our neighbour.

" *With Our Lord.*—Go simply to Our Lord, He will never suffer you to perish, for He loves you. Trust Him, forgetting and despising yourself. Trust Our Lord with entire confidence and simplicity, do not occupy your mind in thinking of your faults. That only nourishes self-love and produces discouragement.

" *With our Neighbour.*—To speak freely, I cannot think any soul could have this virtue of simplicity, wish to belong entirely to God, and yet that she could wilfully be wanting in truth and sincerity without seeing it. A soul ought never to use subterfuges or pretences either in her words or actions, but go along the straight path which has God for its end, and which without any other kind of subtlety takes for its motto: ' Being alone or seen by others I will do neither more nor less, for my God sees me always and penetrates the most secret thoughts of my heart.' I should not like to think, dear Sister, that you fall into the faults of which I have been speaking, for they seem very horrible to me, and so incompatible with the

Spirit of God and His love that not only could a soul addicted to them make no progress in perfection nor acquire any virtue, but over and above, it is just by the want of simplicity that we give power to our enemy, who will make us his plaything and deceive us when he wills. He is strong enough if we only keep silence; for nothing confounds him more than a sincere accusation of our faults, explaining simply the evil as well as the good to those who have charge over us, entirely without exaggeration or dissimulation, so that they may know us and conduct us to the perfection God asks from us, listening with humility and submission to all that is said to us in order simply to accomplish it, whatever it may be. This, my dear Sister, is what came to my mind to say to you. I do not know why God has allowed that I should only speak to you of this holy simplicity, unless because, it seems to me, He has such a horror of its contrary, that when I see in a soul all virtues except that of simplicity, and even if it were favoured with other great graces, all would only seem to me to be delusions. But I have said enough."

A novice had failed in simplicity towards her good Mistress through a particular friendship. She received the following severe lines: "It is the devil who causes you to fail in simplicity so that he may hinder you from breaking the chain by which he holds you attached and which prevents you from uniting yourself to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord, who will abandon your heart if you love anything but Him. And when you fail in simplicity you lose the friendship of the Sacred Heart, who leaves your heart like a desert land which can only produce thorns and thistles, that is to say, faults and imperfections. This is, of course, only when our faults are wilful. This, my dear Sister, is what I have to say on the subject you write about, and I also beg that you will work faithfully at the mortification of your senses, striving to become

humble and simple if you wish to be acknowledged as a true daughter of the Sacred Heart of Our Lord, from whom I beg that you would implore the conversion of the unworthy sinner who loves you sincerely in His holy love."

CHAPTER IX

FRIENDSHIP OF THE SACRED HEART

OUR Lord's Sacred Heart, which was full of love, understood the beauty of friendship. He loved St. John more than the other apostles. He allowed him to rest on His sacred breast at the last supper, and He not only filled him with feelings of love, but He also poured into his soul a marvellous knowledge of the Gospel teaching.

St. Margaret Mary, whose heart was so like that of her divine Spouse, felt the necessity of friendship. But according to the precept of St. Francis de Sales she only spoke of charity, devotion or perfection. She gave to all the Sacred Heart! so her friendship was truly precious. It was excellent because it came from the Sacred Heart, excellent because it always led to the Sacred Heart, excellent because it united her to the Sacred Heart, excellent because it would last for ever in the Sacred Heart.

Her letters are a standing proof of this tender and strong friendship. In every page she speaks of the Sacred Heart. "I am so stupid," she says, "that I could not write a letter unless I might speak of the Sacred Heart, I could not love anyone unless they also loved the Sacred Heart, and I only love what He loves. Let us therefore love Him and trouble about nothing else."

She wished to unite herself to others in friendship with the Sacred Heart. "I consider it a great favour," she says, "to be remembered by you before Our Lord, who bestows on me particular marks of affection, in return for your charity, of which I am very unworthy. God can, when He pleases, get His glory out of our least actions, as I hope He will out of the desires He has given you

that we should share in each other's merits. I would wish to tell you that I have none, but God is so good that He allows us to appropriate for ourselves the real treasure of the truly poor, which is the Sacred Heart of Our Lord, from which we may draw untold riches. It is in this Heart that we must meet, placing there all the good we do, by His grace, exchanging it for His merits, which we shall offer to the Eternal Father instead of our own.

"Behold, therefore, dear Sister, our real refuge and our delicious retreat. In the Sacred Heart we shall live secure from all storms; there we shall see and learn to know ourselves. I have already paid you many visits there, for I am sure love has given you a high place in that adorable Heart. I ardently long for the same, but I am not fit to enter, not having a heart pure, empty of all desires and affections, humble and entirely resigned to the good pleasure of God by pure love, which claims it entirely. I beg that He will never allow us to resist Him and that our friendship may be entirely in Him and for Him.

"I hope, my dear Sister, that you will excuse me speaking like this. I cannot do otherwise than express my thoughts plainly, which are full of esteem and affection for you."

St. Delphima begged to have some news of her husband St. Elziar; he replied: "I dwell in the wound of the Heart of Our Lord, there you will always find me."

Margaret Mary invited her friends at a distance to make visits to her in the Sacred Heart: "Let us often visit each other in the Sacred Heart, and when you do not find me there, implore Him that, in His mercy, He would place me there, and there we will hold our spiritual conversations about our real love for this adorable Heart."

St. Margaret Mary ardently desired to forget and be

forgotten: but in order to please the Sacred Heart she remembered others and wished others to remember her. "Although I much desire that no one should remember me, it seems to me that Our Lord wishes you to remember me and also that I should never forget you.

"Be sure that no one could cherish and love you more than I do in the Sacred Heart, who unites us closely together. I beg of Him to continue this holy union through all eternity: if I forget you before His divine goodness, I must needs forget all that is dear to me. I say to you, as my dear Mother, that I have great need of your holy prayers so that I may obtain the grace of perseverance to the end, in following God's holy will in my regard. I love you with all the strength of my heart in the love of Jesus and Mary."

Who could believe it? Margaret Mary, so detached from the world, looks upon an accusation of forgetfulness as an injury. "I pray the Sacred Heart of our Adorable Master that He would so closely unite our hearts with the bands of His pure love that they may never be separated, even for one moment; as I can assure you, dearest Mother, that He has given me so much esteem and friendship for you that I feel it a great injury when you testify any doubt of it, as when you thought I could forget you. How could I do that, as you are so dear to the Sacred Heart, that you love Our Lord and desire to belong entirely to Him in order to give Him all the honour, glory and love you can procure for Him. I think that is what He most desires from you, so that He may afterwards shower down on you His graces.

"My dear and most beloved Mother, I beg the assistance of your holy prayers so that Our Lord may convert me, and not leave me to myself, as I cause Him to do by my life so evil and full of sin. And, wicked as I am, I will not forget you in His holy presence, for one does not forget what one loves."

The Sacred Heart does not condemn the affections of the human heart. Our Lord purifies them, elevates them and sanctifies them. It is encouraging to see the messenger of divine love understand and appreciate the sweetness of friendship.

CHAPTER X

PURITY OF INTENTION

INTENTION is the end we keep before us in our actions. It makes our work divine, human, or diabolical. Purity of intention is therefore of extreme importance. St. Margaret Mary understood this well. By purity of intention we make a return of love to the Sacred Heart. "My dearest Sisters in the Sacred Heart," she says to her novices, "Our Lord wishes me to say a little word to you from Him, because He loves you and wishes you to change entirely, giving Him some return for His love; this you will do by purity of heart and intention, which will make you very dear to His Heart, by humility, which will enthrone Him in your hearts and keep you firm in His friendship, by charity, which will enable you to reign in His adorable Heart. For, dear children, we must not flatter ourselves: our names are only faintly written on that Heart, and we have blotted them by the impurity of our intentions. I am anxious that this year we should work courageously at cleansing our hearts by these three practices, that He gives you Himself, through His weak slave: first, purity of intention; secondly, humility of heart in all our works; thirdly, unity, with no self-seeking, in what we desire. Our Lord does not wish me to prescribe a certain number of practices. He wishes this left to your love, and He will see by what you do which of you loves Him most." Unfortunately we easily forget. We often act without any intention, and we allow our lives to be guided by routine. It is therefore a good thing to make a compact with the Sacred Heart, giving beforehand to all our actions the meaning and value they ought to have. Margaret Mary has given a new light to recollected souls who wish to adore the Sacred Heart by work as well as by prayer.

Loving Practices in Honour of the Sacred Heart.

May Jesus reign in the hearts of the loving faithful who wish to consecrate all their actions by offering them to the Sacred Heart in the Blessed Sacrament.

In the morning after having placed ourselves under the protection of the Blessed Virgin we will beg of her to offer us to her divine Son in the Blessed Sacrament, to render homage to the offering He makes of Himself to His Eternal Father; uniting our souls with His, so that He may destroy everything there that displeases Him, and we will beg Him to supply all we need.

At the Office we will unite our praise to that of Our Lord, and we will try to enter into His holy dispositions and perfect purity so that He may always stand for us to His Father.

See how He makes Himself obedient to His priests whether they are good or wicked, and places Himself in their hands to die mystically, taking the form of the host so that He may be sacrificed and immolated as they will, without ever showing the least resistance. To make myself like unto Him I will obey promptly, and, as a host that is to be immolated, I will place myself in the hands of my Superiors to be treated as they will, so that dying to all my desires, passions, inclinations or aversions, they may dispose of me as seems best to them, and I will never show any repugnance I may feel. And the violence I do myself in this shall be to honour that used by my Lord when He enters into souls stained with sin, of which He has such a horror, that each time He enters such a soul the agony in the garden is renewed.

We will unite our prayer to that which Our Lord makes for us in the Blessed Sacrament, and in finishing we will offer to Almighty God that of His Divine Son

to repair the faults committed and the waste of time in the prayer we have just made.

Our Lord's life in the Blessed Sacrament is entirely hidden from all creatures who only see the poor contemptible appearances of bread and wine. In the same way I will keep myself so hidden that I should know no greater joy than to see nothing of myself appear except what is poor and abject, keeping myself hidden under the ashes of humility through contempt of creatures so as to console Our Lord for the contempt, injuries, sacrileges, profanations, and other indignities which He suffers in His hidden life without ever complaining. And I will neither pity nor excuse myself, because love for the Sacred Heart obliges me to suffer all without complaint or ever saying: "It is enough."

Jesus is solitary in the Blessed Sacrament, only speaking to His Heavenly Father. To make myself like Him I will also seek to be solitary, speaking only to Jesus. My intellect shall desire to know nothing but Him, so that my mind may be always ready to adore Him and my heart burning to love Him. As far as the senses are concerned, Our Lord appears to be dead. I must therefore die to all that only pleases the senses, denying myself all that would gratify self. Jesus makes Himself poor in the Blessed Sacrament, giving us all that He is without reservation, so that He may possess our hearts and enrich them with His graces. To imitate Him and gain His loving Heart I must despise and contemn myself and be quite content that others should despise me.

Jesus keeps perpetual silence. I will imitate Him by interior and exterior silence, only speaking when my Rule or charity demands it.

When I go to the refectory I will beg Our Lord to guard me from myself, so that the nourishment I am going to take for His love and by obedience may be for me a spiritual communion by which His purity may be mani-

fested in my intentions, His grace in my soul, and His love in my heart, so that I may never cease loving Him nor be separated from Him.

When I go to recreation I will be careful to offer it to Our Lord's Sacred Heart, speaking of Him and accepting willingly the mortifications and humiliations I may meet with, consecrating all my words to the divine Word, so that He may cause all to be said for His glory.

When I warm myself I will beg Him, who is a burning furnace of love in the Blessed Sacrament, to inflame our hearts so much with His love that in being consumed they may become love itself, to love Him eternally.

When I suffer from thirst, I will offer it to assuage that which the adorable Heart of Jesus suffers in the Blessed Sacrament, to be known and loved. In taking my rest I will unite it to that which Our Lord took from all eternity in the bosom of the Father, and to that which He takes in the Blessed Sacrament and in pure souls, offering Him every breath and every pulsation of my heart as so many acts of love and adoration and praise, and the sacrifice of my whole being to Him in the Blessed Sacrament, begging that the rest I am going to take may renew my strength to serve Him better.

When I shall receive Him sacramentally, I will often offer to the Eternal Father the holy dispositions of Our Lady at the moment of the Incarnation, uniting them with those of Her Divine Son in order to supply what is wanting in me to receive Him worthily. And when I shall have received Him I will offer Him to the Eternal Father as my thanksgiving, my praise, adoration, and love, begging Him then to repair all the faults of my past life, to fulfil in me all His will, supplicating Him that, as He has never transgressed the laws that love laid on Him in this Holy Sacrament, He would never permit that I should be careless in the observance of my Rule. For

this reason, O Sacred Heart, I choose Thee as my dwelling place, so that Thou mayest be my strength in the battle, support in my weakness, my light and guide in darkness and the reparation of all my faults, the sanctifier of all my intentions and actions, which I unite to Thine and offer to Thee that they may be a continual preparation for receiving Thee.

When we leave the choir we will beg of the Holy Angels to make reparation for our faults and to keep our places, offering to God what we do for His glory and our salvation.

CHAPTER XI

SELF-DENIAL

MARGARET MARY knew well that a soul chosen by Our Lord must refuse Him nothing. So in speaking to a generous soul she urges her to practise courageous self-renunciation.

"I beg of Our Lord to be Himself your strength so that you may attain to the perfection of His crucified spouses, who must offer themselves without reserve, with their whole heart and affection, to be entirely consecrated and dedicated to His service. But, my Sister, what do I mean by these words? Will you have enough courage to carry them out? That is to say, to die continually to your inclinations, passions and satisfactions—in a word, to all that is of unmortified nature, to make Jesus live in you by His grace and His love? Not content with the crucifixion you make of yourself He will be much better pleased with that which others shall inflict on you by correcting, mortifying and humbling you: and sometimes He is pleased to afflict us Himself, making us suffer interiorly and exteriorly. But to a soul like yours, which is filled with so great a desire of belonging entirely to God, it does not matter by what way Our Lord leads her. If only He is satisfied, that is enough, we need not fret over the small troubles that come generally from our unmortified self-love, which causes us to want to suffer only what we choose, and to reject what divine Providence sends us because we neither sought it nor expected it.

"We must therefore separate ourselves from self and from the satisfaction found in creatures. For the Sacred Heart will not reign where self-satisfaction is found. Our Lord gives you a proof of a true love when He leads you in the way of abnegation. As He gives you the grace

to see it, follow Him fearlessly, and I think He will do His will and establish His reign in your heart.

"He wishes to banish from it all creatures and then self. Therefore rejoice when you are forgotten or despised; these things are sent that self may be no longer pitied or loved, but that the whole affection of your heart may be for God. I think God will bestow great graces on you if you have the courage to follow His lead by forgetting self and practising great purity of intention, uniting yourself to Our Lord's intentions, loving with His love and willing with His will. Choose His Heart for your sanctuary, where you will offer your prayers, so that they may be pleasing to God."

We shall see in the following chapter the admirable letter she wrote to her brother on abnegation.

CHAPTER XII

MORTIFICATION

TO reform man his heart must first be captured, for in man the heart is above all and the source of all our actions; its dispositions make them good or evil. The divine Spouse, inviting the soul to a perfect union, says: "Place me as a seal on your heart and on your arm," for whoever has Christ in his heart has Him also on his arm—that is, in his exterior actions.

The devotion to the Sacred Heart, more than any other, takes possession of our hearts and subdues them interiorly to the good pleasure of our Beloved. It alone would lead us to the practice of mortification. The Sacred Heart is outraged by the crimes of men; He asks for victims who will bear with Him the weight of divine Justice. His call echoes in the depths of a recollected soul and it responds by the practice of mortification.

Margaret Mary, under the control of obedience, was heroic. The Sacred Heart wished her to be the model of voluntary penance as well as the model of humility and meekness. "He wished her nearly always to be gathering myrrh," says one of her Superiors, "and the Sacred Heart knows how eagerly His gentle victim cherished it, but always under obedience." "I hide nothing from my Mistress," she says, "though I had the intention of making her permissions extend further than she intended. When I attempted this, our Holy Founder reproved me so sharply that I have never had the courage to try again. For these words are always engraven on my heart: 'And dost thou, my daughter, expect to please God in going beyond the limit of obedience, which is the principal support and foundation of this Institute, which austerities are not?'"

Later on, the Sacred Heart exacted more austerities from St. Margaret Mary. Her Superiors recognized that she was led by the Spirit of God and allowed them. She also knew how to subordinate them to the spirit of interior mortification, for she wrote to her brother: "You understand, I hope, that I do not intend to urge you to perform great penances, but to a generous self-denial of your passions and inclinations, to detach your heart from all earthly things, to be charitable towards your neighbour and generous towards the poor. See God in all you do and seek Him alone, practise purity and humility of heart, only thinking of pleasing Him and referring to Him all the glory, without desiring esteem or reputation amongst men. Dear brother, let us be careful that our lives are not a disgrace to the vocation we have received, which exacts from us an angelic life. You see how I take advantage of being closely united to you in the Sacred Heart, to speak quite plainly of what is in my mind. Courage, therefore, my dear brother, finish what you have begun in honour of the divine Heart, and believe that Our Lord will render you a hundredfold for all you do for His love.

"Interior mortification cannot injure bodily health, and the Sacred Heart exacts it rigorously. 'When the salutary bread of suffering fails, it is necessary to seek for it by self-denial'; my susceptible and proud nature gives me plenty of opportunities. My Sovereign Lord does not wish me to lose one, and when I do, because of the great violence I have to do myself to overcome my repugnances, He makes me pay double. And when He wants much from me, He is so insistent, it is impossible to refuse. I have grieved much for having tried to do so. He asks me for all that is most opposed to my nature and inclinations, and this constantly."

Margaret Mary required the same courage in those who wished to love the Sacred Heart.

"What a consolation it is for me to see you so liberal towards our divine Lord! It seems to me a strong proof that He wishes to detach you entirely from earthly things and that He wills you to become a saint. It depends entirely on yourself to become a saint, for He will give you great graces if only you will correspond by following faithfully the holy inspirations and good desires He will give you. Of course it will be costly, for nature fears its own destruction and all that makes it suffer. But, alas! we cannot make it die without much pain, for everything in us resists, and our passions are always alive and cause us to fall. We must not be troubled on that account nor give way to discouragement, but strive on, drawing profit from our falls and urging ourselves on to the fight, like the saints, who had their weaknesses as we have. Like them, then, we must fight to the end and die with our weapons in our hands, for the crown is only given to the conquerors."

She was very careful to teach the novices the mortification to be found in the observance of meekness and humility. "Be very humble and meek in bearing the little trials you will meet with, suffering with a gentle patience to be humbled and contradicted, thinking always that it is what the loving Heart of our good Lord has prepared for you in order to perfect you according to His will. Do not allow yourself to dwell uselessly on what mortifies and humbles you; that only tends to destroy interior prayer and to increase self-love.

"Above all be careful never to excuse yourself, and when you feel inclined to do so, say in your heart: 'My Jesus, who wert innocence itself, Thou didst never offer any excuse, and shall I who am a sinner dare to do so?' Remember never to disapprove, accuse nor judge anyone but yourself, so that your tongue, which was made to praise Our Lord and on which He so often rests, may not become a means of poisoning your soul."

CHAPTER XIII

CONFIDENCE

ST. MARGARET MARY recommended nothing more earnestly than confidence and the total surrender of ourselves to the Sacred Heart. Our Lord had exacted these two virtues from His holy spouse. She had found all in Him. She was therefore anxious that her disciples should follow the same way. Confidence is such a sweet virtue in itself—above all, confidence in the Sacred Heart.

To a young religious, beginning her novitiate, Margaret Mary gave this lesson: "If you wish to honour the Sacred Heart of Our Lord, give to Him all that you do and suffer, doing all your actions for Him so that He may dispose of them all according to His good pleasure, uniting yourself in all to His holy intentions. Take up your dwelling in this adorable Heart, confiding to It all your annoyances and vexations, so that all may be purified. You will there find the remedy for all your sorrows, and strength for all your weakness, and He will be your refuge in all your needs. Treat Our Lord with perfect confidence and simplicity. Rest on His breast as a child without care; His love will care for you. Do not waste time in thinking about your faults; that only discourages, and increases self-love. When we have committed faults we must humble ourselves before God and ask His forgiveness, and then, as our holy Founder tells us, set to work again with fresh courage. Forget your own interests and all care for yourself in the arms of our Heavenly Father."

This lesson, so full of meaning, was developed with love by St. Margaret Mary. This surrender, what must

be its character? Universal; that is, it must extend to everything—our body, soul, time and eternity.

"Ask for nothing and refuse nothing, keeping yourself ready in the silence of a detached soul to do and suffer all, for the body desiring neither health rather than sickness, rest rather than labour; for the soul, appreciating dryness and desolation as good for you, accepting them with the same thanksgiving with which you would naturally receive sweetness and consolations; always keeping your soul in peace, making it act purely from a motive of faith, without considering whether you have sensible consolation or not, which often only hinders us in our way to holiness.

"The third surrender is that of our heart, seat of our love and of our will, which you must cause to die so entirely in the Sacred Heart of Our Lord that you allow Him to will for you all He desires, seeking neither pleasure nor pain, but taking willingly whatever He sends, sweet or bitter, for it is the same love that gives both, and always for your sanctification. Bear patiently the little trials that come to you from others, showing no displeasure, for that is contrary to the Spirit of the Sacred Heart. And for your prayer, if you will take my advice you will remain in the dispositions you mention in your letter, peaceful and at rest, supplying for all by your perfect abandonment to the will of God, standing in His Presence as a useless servant without agitating yourself to make special acts, except from time to time when Our Lord suggests them. Do not be troubled by your self-love, which insinuates that you are wasting time and doing nothing. Do not listen to it, but turn your thoughts to Our Lord.

"Make it your principal care, dear Sister, to deny yourself and resist all the reflections of self-love, which are opposed to God's designs for you. Throw all your miseries into the arms of God's mercy and think only of

loving Him by forgetting yourself, and then let Him do all He wills in and for you.

"Take for your motto: 'Divine love has conquered me. It alone shall possess my heart.'"

She writes again: "To commence this perfect surrender of self and of your own will after Communion you will offer yourself entirely to Our Lord, keeping back no excuse of your own will and asking forgiveness for the bad use you have made of it in the past. In offering your will to the divine Heart, you will beg the grace of living in future as though you were deaf, blind and dumb; deaf, in not hearing the suggestions of self-love or words which wound charity or, in general, anything that could tarnish the purity of your soul; blind to the faults of others so as never to judge them; blind also to your own way, letting yourself be guided in all by holy obedience, without reply or remark; dumb, in never speaking of yourself, neither to praise or excuse yourself. Remember, when you do one or the other you make yourself an object of contempt to the angels."

But is not this entire abnegation of self a virtue for the perfect only? What share can we, miserable sinners, have in this sweet confidence? St. Margaret Mary replies: "In order to dwell in His Sacred Heart what have you to fear, as He Himself invites you to take there your rest? Is It not the Throne of Mercy where the most miserable are the most welcome, provided love presents them in the abyss of their misery? And if we are cowardly, cold, sinful, imperfect, is He not a burning furnace where we can perfect and purify ourselves as gold in the fire, becoming for Him a loving sacrifice offered to do His most holy will? Therefore never fear to abandon yourself unreservedly to His loving Providence, for a child can never perish in the arms of an Almighty Father. I think I have already told you that Our Lord wishes you to have a filial confidence in Him

rather than so much fear, and as He loves you, what have you so much to fear, except that you do not, in return, love Him with the love He asks of you, which, if I am not mistaken, consists in this perfect surrender and forgetfulness of self? Leave yourself, and you will find all. Forget all, and Our Lord will think for you. Bury yourself in your nothingness, and you will possess God. But who will do all this? The love that you will find in the Sacred Heart, in which you must not only hide yourself, but you must also take It as your Guide and Director, so that It may teach you what It requires of you and strengthen you to accomplish it perfectly. And, if I am not mistaken, it is this in a few words: He wishes you to live without support, without friends and without pleasure. And in proportion as you meditate on these words He will enable you to understand them.

"Again, dear Sister, let me tell you not to be troubled at your faults. When you have committed any, say, full of confidence, to Our Lord's divine Heart: 'O my only Love, pay for Thy poor slave and repair the evil I have done, make it conduce to Thy glory, to the edification of my neighbour and the salvation of my soul.' In this way our falls help us much to be humble and to know what we are, and how useful it is for us to be hidden in the abyss of our own nothingness: but self-love, which would always be noticed, approved and loved, can neither listen to this lesson nor understand it. But do not reason with it, for it only grows on being noticed.

"Never omit your Communion: for we could not give a greater pleasure to our enemy than by keeping away from Him who destroyed all his power over us."

But how does Our Lord consider a sinful soul which throws itself into His arms? Does he no longer intend to punish it? No, but He takes His revenge in His own way: "Alas! I am not faithful and I often fall, and sometimes one would think Our Lord took pleasure in those

faults to confound my pride and to establish my soul in a lowly opinion of itself, seeing that, without Him, I can only commit faults and fall without being able to rise again. But the Beloved of my soul comes to my help and, extending His arms, like a good Father, says: 'Thou knowest well thou canst do nothing without Me,' which fills me with gratitude towards His loving goodness. I was moved to tears seeing that He only punished me for my sins and continual unfaithfulness by greater marks of His love, with which He seemed to resist my ingratitude. He sometimes displays my infidelities side by side with His graces, making me unable to speak because of my tears, for I suffered then more than I can say. In this way does divine Love play with Its unworthy slave."

Therefore we may receive in conclusion the following resolutions: "Keep your soul always in peace, in the love of and with confidence in Our Lord, and remember what you have promised Him, an undivided love and humility without stint, and a generous mortification. You owe this to the Sacred Heart. I leave you there as in your dwelling. If you commit a fault, take from this Heart that which will make reparation, place therein all you do, seek therein all you need, taking care never to turn away your eyes from Him, and if this should ever happen I pray that He will Himself punish you."

Part II

CHAPTER I

THE SACRED HEART AND THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

THE last chapters of the third part of the *Introduction to a Devout Life* are consecrated to the duties of our state of life. In no other work does St. Francis de Sales prove himself more perfectly a director of souls. With an admirable discretion he traces for each one the way he must follow, according to the condition in which Providence has placed him.

The writings of St. Margaret Mary leave in this respect a great want. It is true that in several places she affirms that devotion to the Sacred Heart is suitable for all conditions, but she has not determined how each one is to adapt it to the duties of that state. Her letters, nearly all addressed to religious, could only, of course, contain counsels appropriate to their state. The teaching of St. Margaret Mary is, however, useful for all states of life. Whatever may be our condition, we are all under the obligation of loving God above all things, of denying ourselves, of constantly imitating Our Lord, and of perpetual vigilance in order to keep up our fervour. These obligations are, of course, more binding on souls consecrated to God. By religious profession they have become Spouses of Christ and of Christ Crucified. No one living in this world could ever understand the grandeur conferred by this title on a weak creature. A new, intimate, profound and eternal union is established between such a soul and the Incarnate Word. It has acquired rights over His Sacred Person and over His divine Heart.

It is His Spouse. On the other side Our Lord has gained fresh rights over the soul. He is not only the God, the Saviour and the Teacher, He is also the Spouse. A soul so highly privileged and called to so great an honour must commence quite a new life.

A life of UNION, by an undivided love for the Spouse, chosen among thousands.

A life of SACRIFICE, by being stretched on the cross with the Crucified Spouse.

A life of SANCTITY, in acquiring the virtues of the Spouse who dwells among the lilies.

This was the model of the Spouse Our Lord wished to find in St. Margaret Mary, and when she became Mistress of novices she tried to train her disciples after the same model.

CHAPTER II

A RELIGIOUS MUST BE CLOSELY UNITED TO HER SPOUSE

THE union between our divine Lord and His Spouse must be most intimate. There should be a constant emulation between Jesus and the soul. "Jesus is jealous of your heart. He wishes it to belong entirely to Him. You must also be jealous of His Heart in loving It the most, if you can." The Sacred Heart tries in every way by His divine Providence to attract the hearts of religious. He draws to Himself the unfaithful soul, making it see how unhappy it is, separated from Him. "How grateful you ought to be for the tender love God shows you, His great mercy preventing your being lost; but instead He leads you in the right way, by which, whether you will or no, you will reach Him. For this reason this Sovereign Master, seeing that you often leave Him to follow a stranger, has attached you and your will, as a little dog, by the cord of His love, and so draws you after Him. And as He leads you by a rough and thorny road, you often turn your head and look back to see if there is nothing that would make it easier. But it is useless to look. The road must be traversed, for this is the time to fight and suffer with humble submission, so that you may be purified and perfected according to Our Lord's will and so accomplish His designs over you. What is there to fear when by His Power He surrounds you like a strong wall, thus protecting you from your enemies?

"No one can console or deliver a soul if God intends that it should suffer. Allow yourself to be led by Him, because you are in the state in which He wishes you to be, without support or friend and without any other desire

than those with which He inspires you. Do this and you will fulfil His will. You must simply disavow all that you know displeases Our Lord, who asks of you the practice of meekness and humility. Labour and suffer and be humbly silent. Only think of using well the present moment."

A religious ought to be crucified with her Spouse. A wife participates in her husband's condition. This is the law amongst men and it is also the law entailed by the religious life. We could not understand a woman who would pass her time in joy and dissipation while her husband was in sorrow, labour and pain. She ought to be at his side sharing his afflictions. But, if we understand it well, what an honour for us to be called on to take our part in Our Lord's labours and share His pain! Our Lord took care to instruct Margaret Mary on this point even during her novitiate. On the 2nd of November, 1672, He said to her: "Remember that it is a crucified God to whom thou wilt be espoused, therefore thou must become like Him, bidding adieu to all the pleasures of life, for there will be no more for thee, excepting such as are marked with the cross." Margaret Mary never forgot it for herself, and she often reminded others. "Do not forget that being the spouse of a crucified God, you must be entirely His, keeping your soul calm so that He may establish His peace therein. The life of a good religious ought to be a continual death to self and to all the pleasures of life, finding none except in being crucified with her dear Spouse, Jesus Christ. In doing this we shall find life in death, sweetness in what is bitter, and God in our nothingness.

"What a great glory to be nothing to the world and to ourselves, so that we may be possessed by God and have Him alone for our sole possession. But we must not flatter ourselves that we can enjoy so great a privilege without suffering much, and doing violence to ourselves. But

let us be full of courage, as it is the violent only who bear away the Kingdom of Heaven, and you know that in religious life we must continually overcome self, for it is a life entirely opposed to the desires of the flesh and of the senses, so crucified that it may truly be called a living death.

"A good religious ought always to practise this death to all the pleasures of life by a true mortification of her senses and a profound humility of heart which causes us to despise and forget ourselves. I hope for you a faithful correspondence to grace according to the lights Our Lord shall give you. In all we do we ought only to strive after union with God and conformity with our Crucified Spouse, but to accomplish this we must crush underfoot all human respect, which would retard our perfection. I counsel you sincerely to go to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord if you wish to conquer your enemies and find the strength and consolation you need, which will never be denied you."

Always practical in her advice, St. Margaret Mary invited the novices to sacrifice themselves, indicating where they were to use the sacrificial knife. Lent is a time for corporal penance, but she knew that St. Francis does not wish his dear daughter to practise great austerities. She can requite in full by a more perfect sacrifice!

"I am going to give you, my dear Sisters, a little practice which I think necessary to enable you to live according to our holy observances and make you worthy to receive the graces Our Lord has ready for you. You will prove to Him how much you love Him, if, as we are told in our Constitutions, you only use your ears, tongue, eyes and heart faithfully in His love and service. To do this you must enclose yourselves in the Sacred Heart in order that by an entire mortification of your senses you may find a new life of mind and heart, mortifying the curiosity

of your eyes by keeping them cast down, looking only at Our Lord in your heart. You will cause your tongue to die by saying nothing useless during times of silence and in conversation, never saying a word of complaint, grumbling or uncharitableness, never speaking in your own praise nor in excuse of your failings. Never show any dislike or repugnance to orders from Superiors, speaking of yourself with contempt and of others with esteem. You will choose fifteen acts to perform out of the above, and if you have wilfully failed five times out of that number, you will say the Miserere with your arms in form of a cross.

"You will cause your taste to die by eating with indifference whatever is placed before you.

"You will cause the curiosity of your ears to die by not allowing them to hear anything that would distract you from God. Five acts.

"And every time you perform one of these acts you will say: 'O Sacred Heart, I die to this pleasure so that I may live to Thy love.'

"This is what I think He asks of you, so that during this holy time of Lent you may die to yourself in order to rise again with Him.

"These twenty-five acts, together with the fifteen I gave you previously, shall be offered to honour the forty days Our Lord was in the desert, and they who are the most faithful shall be the most loved and caressed by Him and shall obtain a great gift of prayer which is only acquired by true mortification. This I beg for you with all my heart."

Advent has also been consecrated by the Church to the practice of penance. Margaret Mary exacted new sacrifices from the Spouses of a Crucified Lord. This time it was interior mortification.

"Your last practice for the year 1686 shall be to honour the Lord hidden in His Mother's womb. He had

chosen her heart for the Altar on which He immolated Himself continually to the divine Justice, in order to gain for us His holy love.

"1. We will offer the three powers of our soul, keeping them annihilated in the Soul of the Word. Our intellect annihilated in His, in order to know Him better, denying ourselves any useless or vain knowledge, especially if it concerns others. Three acts.

"2. We will keep our memory annihilated in that of the Word, remembering Him only, or what brings us abjection and humiliation, never losing an opportunity of cutting off all the defections of our self-love. Three acts.

"3. We will keep our will annihilated in His adorable Will, letting Him dispose of us either by the orders of Superiors or by His holy inspirations, saying always: 'Not my will but Thine.' Three acts.

"We will also try to keep all our desires annihilated in those of Our Lord, and between each exercise of the day make three acts of love, three of adoration, and three of contrition."

CHAPTER III

A RELIGIOUS MUST BE LIKE HER SPOUSE

IN the school of the Sacred Heart, Margaret Mary had learned that the sanctity of a religious is not a matter of sentiment but the reward of perpetual efforts and of self-sacrifice. The Sacred Heart exacts solid virtue. Margaret Mary was a true model, but she exacted the same from her novices. "Cowardly souls," she used to say, "are not fit for the religious life, which is one of combat." She, of course, constantly spoke of Our Lord's love, but she required in return a love which, like the queen bee, produces a swarm of virtues.

Here is an account of her doctrine on the religious life to a novice:

"I very willingly, dearest Sister, grant your request by writing a few words before leaving you in order to recommend you to be always faithful to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord. Do all the good He seems to ask of you, loving Him above all else as your good Father who, with so much love, suffered for you on the Cross. It is only just that you should belong entirely to Him, resting on His loving breast, and leaving to Him all care of yourself. Never commit a deliberate fault, no matter how small. You must also be most faithful to your Rule, striving with all your strength to conform yourself to the observances and to the practices and teaching you receive in the novitiate, keeping them well before your mind, so that nothing may distract you. Be obedient in the least things, because often a great grace depends on our fidelity to what appears small.

"Let your first care be to become a good religious, trying in all to conform yourself to your crucified Spouse, to whom so far you are only bound by your desires.

Therefore you must beautify your soul with the virtues which will make you more pleasing in His sight, above all with obedience. He became obedient to the death of the Cross and now He always obeys the priest at the altar; in the same way you must allow yourself to be in the hands of your Superiors to obey until death, dying to all your inclinations and self-will, allowing yourself to be led and disposed of without resistance or reply, whatever repugnance you may feel. You may always say to yourself: 'I did not enter religious life to do my own will.' Try to deny self on every opportunity, uniting your acts with those of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, where He is annihilated and hidden from all. Do not interfere with anything, but humble yourself and try to do well what the Rule and obedience expect from you, being ready to suffer without complaining or thinking others unjust towards you.

"Never excuse yourself nor seek to be praised or approved. And if any should do so, say to yourself: 'I do not deserve that,' and if they despise you, say: 'That is what is due to me.' Be meek if you would please Our Lord, who finds His delight with the meek and humble of heart. Do not trouble yourself about anything, not even about your faults, only humbling yourself if you fall into any, keeping your soul in peace and beginning again. This is how you must live if you wish God to dwell within you, for you must always look on your soul as His sanctuary and keep it free from all stain of sin. You must also make of your soul a throne for His love; retiring there with Him and entertaining Him silently, adoring and loving Him with all your strength, resisting every useless thought and all vain curiosity so as to listen to what He will say to your heart, from which you must cut off all self-love. If you do not do this, He will withdraw Himself from you and you will never learn to converse with Him. Above all, I recommend you to be

cheerful, happy, and content, for this is a true mark of the spirit of God who wishes us to serve Him in peace and joy. Do not give way to a feeling of constraint, but do all with great liberty of spirit in the presence of God, and with only one desire, that of pleasing Him. And the easiest way to do all this is to engrave deeply in your heart the love of your own abjection, which you must always attend to, keeping yourself little and low in your own estimation, with the simplicity of a child. Do not hide anything from those who guide you, neither the good nor the evil, and God will bless you, for He hates all duplicity. I have said enough. I beg of Our Lord to make you faithful, for I love you much, and it would be a great sorrow to me if you did not improve, but I hope you will, with God's help. Good-bye, beloved Sister. Pray often, I beg of you, for the conversion of this weak sinner."

What a magnificent programme! It is complete, and would suffice for a lifetime.

CHAPTER IV

OBEDIENCE

OBEDIENCE is the foundation of the religious life. Without it, community life would be impossible. Therefore the members who compose it must give up their own will, and submit to the authority of their Superiors, as they would to that of God Himself. The Sacred Heart who came to restore all things and particularly the life of perfection led by religious, would teach us the excellence of obedience. The lessons Our Lord has given us on this virtue should be remembered and meditated on with great care. The Sacred Heart gave Margaret Mary a great mission, one that raised her above her Sisters and even above her Superiors, but Our Lord did not intend by this to dispense her from obeying. On the contrary, He exacted from her a perfect obedience to her Superiors, and when there seemed a difficulty between obeying His orders and those of Superiors, it was the latter she was to follow. Our Lord said to Margaret Mary: "Understand well that I am not offended by all the opposition thou dost make Me through obedience, for which I gave My life. I wish thee to do what thy Superiors command and that thou shouldst do nothing I command except with their consent, for I love obedience, and without it a soul cannot please me."

Neither can a soul avoid Satan's snares without obedience. The Sacred Heart warned St. Margaret Mary: "My daughter, do not believe every inspiration and do not place thy confidence in it, for Satan is furious to deceive thee. Therefore, do nothing without permission, so that he may not overcome thee, for he has no power over those who obey." So when Our Lord asked her to

watch with Him one hour in the night between Thursday and Friday, she replied with charming simplicity: "Lord, Thou knowest I do not belong to myself and can only do what my Superior will allow." Our Lord replied: "That is what I wish, for Almighty as I am, I do not wish anything from thee without thy Superior's consent. Listen to these words from Truth itself: All religious who are not united with their Superiors should look upon themselves as vessels of reprobation in which good wine is changed into corruption, and if the divine Sun of Justice should dart its rays on them, it would have the same effect as the sun would have, shining on mud. These souls are so far from My Heart that the more they try by Sacraments and prayers or other exercises to get near Me, the further away do I withdraw Myself. I hold them in such horror. They will go from one hell to another, for it is this want of submission which has caused the loss of so many souls, and will ruin still more; for all Superiors hold My place whether they are good or evil, therefore the subject thinking to injure his Superior only inflicts mortal wounds on his own soul, and then it is in vain for him to weep at the throne of mercy; he shall not be heard."

What terrible threats for a rebellious religious! But we need not be astonished at the anathemas of the Sacred Heart: "Woe to the world," He had said, "because of scandals!" Scandals ruin souls, therefore Jesus has cursed the world. Disobedience is the greatest scandal of religious life, therefore is the Sacred Heart angry against religious who are not submissive to their Superiors.

CHAPTER V

PUNISHMENT OF DISOBEDIENCE

TAUGHT by this instruction Margaret Mary would never have wilfully committed a fault against obedience, but she once, through a want of simplicity, thought herself unable to execute an order she had received. She was severely punished. "To show how far my unfaithfulness had led me, in spite of such great graces, I will narrate the following incident. I felt anxious to go into retreat and to prepare for some days previously, and for this I for the second time traced the name of Jesus on my heart. But unfortunately sores appeared. Having told my Superior on the eve of the day when I should have begun my retreat, she said some remedy ought to be applied in case of dangerous consequences. This caused me to complain to Our Lord: 'Oh, my only Love, is it Thy will that others should see what I have done to myself for Thy love? Canst Thou not cure me Thyself who art the sovereign remedy for all ills?' At length, touched by the sorrow I felt at this being known, He promised me that by the morrow the sores should be healed, which happened accordingly. Not having been able to see our Mother, I could not tell her what had happened. She therefore sent me a little note telling me to show my sores to the Sister who brought it, and that she would give me a remedy. As I was cured I thought I was dispensed from obeying, until I had told our Mother. I went to find her and said I had not done as she had written, because I was cured. I cannot tell how severely I was punished for this fault both by my Superior and my Lord and Master, who placed me beneath His Sacred Feet, where I was kept about five days weeping for my disobedience and asking pardon by constant

penance. And my Superior also treated me without mercy, according as Our Lord inspired her, for she refused me permission to receive Holy Communion, which was the hardest punishment I could receive. I would a thousand times have preferred that they should condemn me to death. She also made me show the Sister where the sore had been, who found all healed. But I felt very much humbled at her seeing the place.

"But all that was nothing, for there was no torment I was not willing to endure, I was so grieved at having displeased my Lord. However, after having made me understand how much the smallest fault against obedience is displeasing to Him in the soul of a religious He came Himself during the last days of the retreat to dry my tears and give life to my soul. But no caress and kindness from Him could allay my sorrow. It was sufficient for me to remember I had displeased Him to make me burst into tears. For He made me know, so well, what obedience is in a religious soul, which I confess I had hitherto not understood, though it would take me too long to tell. And He told me that in punishment of my fault the holy Name which I had traced on my heart and which had cost me so much, and also those I had previously traced and which were not entirely effaced, would now disappear entirely. I may truly say I had a sorrowful retreat."

Margaret Mary was most exact about obedience. She said to Our Lord: "It matters not to me what work You give me, all my time is Yours and not mine." She was quite indifferent about employments and accepted any with perfect submission. She felt a great repugnance to teaching the boarding-school children and yet devoted herself to it with zeal and constancy. "I would wish my Superior to dispose of me entirely as she wishes, and I wish to accept humbly and with submission any work she may assign to me, notwithstanding the great dislike I feel to all the offices. I will try in future not to show

my repugnance about them, nor when I am sent to the parlour or told to write letters, doing all as though I liked it."

Margaret Mary, although so submissive, yet gave way one day to a feeling of impatience. She was at once reproved by Our Lord. "I was occupied in work which prevented me making my meditation with the Community, and in consequence one Easter day I gave way to a feeling of vexation. At once my Lord reproved me. 'Understand well, My daughter,' He said, 'that the prayers of sacrifice and submission are more agreeable to Me than that of contemplation.'" Margaret Mary often said that nothing seemed to her more horrible in the house of God than a wilful religious. She also practised this submission in the carrying out of her mission, and yet in this she might have had objections to make. She obeyed heroically. "I can only occupy myself with the Sacred Heart of my Lord and that only according to obedience." Oh! how holy the soul that gave up all its own ideas and feelings and even the exercise of a zeal which stopped at nothing, not even the torments of hell, if only the Sacred Heart might be loved.

CHAPTER VI

OBSERVANCE OF RULE

THE observance of rule is as necessary to the religious life as obedience, rather it is an obedience itself. So the Sacred Heart and His docile messenger show us the Rule as well as the orders of Superiors as the expression of God's will. The Sacred Heart exacts a strict observance of the Rule and will Himself submit to it the first. "I will adapt My graces to the spirit of the Rule, to the will of thy Superiors and to thy own weakness. Suspect anything that would cause thee to commit the smallest infraction, I wish thee to prefer it to all." "Thou canst not please Me more than by a constant fidelity in walking without subterfuge in the observance of thy Rule, against which the smallest faults are great in My eyes. A religious deceives himself and is separated from Me, if he thinks to find me in any other way than that of fidelity to rule." Margaret Mary in turn fulfilled all the different offices in the Community, except those of Superior and portress. But in all she was able to acquit herself without ever relaxing in her observance of the Rule. When Mistress of novices she devoted herself to teaching them to love the regular life. "By observing the Rule, the Sacred Heart is won, but by neglect of it His displeasure is incurred." Such was her teaching.

"As God has placed you in the safe way of the religious life, you have only to abandon yourself and let yourself be led by holy obedience, which is the true sign of God's will for you. And so, with sincerity and confidence, go on your way, which is that of exactitude in the observance of your religious duties from which you must not deviate, unless obliged by necessity or charity. Every-

thing else is of secondary importance, and must yield to the Rule. All your life you must be very grateful for your vocation, for it is a particular grace which Our Lord does not give to all, and of which you will have to render an account at death. To show that you love it, you must strive to be very faithful to all the observances. But what I recommend most is that you try to be always very recollected, restraining your eyes, tongue, and ears from all that would distract you. I recommend this particularly because I believe you can only make yourself pleasing to God by being faithful. He will then care specially for you and take you under His protection. The means to be very faithful is to love Him and avoid everything that could displease Him. 'Place over your eyes the bandage of a holy and loving submission to God and, for the love of Him, to whoever has the right to direct you.' In all your acts of obedience remember that Jesus was obedient to the death of the cross and try to conform yourself in all to Jesus, your love, and to Him crucified. Do all from love, living in the present and taking no care for the future."

Subjection to the Rule and the orders of obedience causes us to have many interior struggles. If we would obtain the victory let us imitate St. Margaret Mary.

Feeling a great difficulty in submitting to her Superioress, her divine Master showed her His holy body covered with wounds, and reproached her with her ingratitude and cowardice in not overcoming herself for love of Him. Margaret Mary said: "What wilt Thou, my God, that I should do, for my will is stronger than I am?" He told her that if she placed it in the wound of His Sacred Side she would have no further difficulty in overcoming herself. "Oh, my Saviour!" she cried, "place it so far in and attach it to Thee so firmly that it may never leave that refuge." She declared that from that time all seemed to her so easy, that she had no difficulty in overcoming herself.

CHAPTER VII

CHARITY

THE vows of religion are binding on religious. Obedience unites wills to the will of the Superior, but charity alone unites hearts. Charity makes a convent like unto paradise, but if it is banished a convent becomes almost like hell. Our divine Lord has uttered terrible threats against those who fail in charity. Margaret Mary begged of Our Lord to tell her how to satisfy the desire she felt to love Him. He told her she could not better show her love than by loving others for love of Him, that she must exert herself to procure the salvation of sinners and also of her Sisters although she was the most miserable of them all, and that she was to forget her own interests in seeking theirs. As she could not quite understand what Our Lord meant He made her see that He wished charity to be re-established in all hearts, for by faults against this virtue souls were separated from Him, who is charity itself. By these faults religious and worldly people do not fear to wound charity, that divine virtue which is born of God Himself. "And," Our Lord continued, "it is these members, half corrupted and ready for the fire, who cause Me the greatest pain. They should have been punished ere now if it had not been for the devotion they have for My holy Mother, who appeases My anger, which can only be done by the offering of a victim." "I was deeply touched by this," says St. Margaret Mary, "and I would willingly have endured any torment, even the pains of purgatory until the day of judgment, to satisfy His justice."

"Oh, my God," she prayed, "tell me what has so irritated Thy justice?" Our Lord told her it was the

sins that were hidden from creatures, but could not be hidden from Him. He also showed her how pleased He was with the pains taken by Superiors to re-establish charity in their communities, and that they should receive a great reward. But if the religious did not amend, His mercy would give place to His justice, because charity is the true characteristic and real spirit of the daughters of St. Francis de Sales. She seemed to see this great saint saying to Our Lord that he would willingly do penance until the day of judgment, for his daughters.

Margaret Mary, whose heart had been plunged into the Heart of Jesus, possessed the virtue of charity in an eminent degree. Her contemporaries say: "Towards her neighbour her charity was universal, she had a tender and compassionate heart for all. Severe as she was towards herself, she was kind and helpful to others, excusing them in such a way as to appear to be willing to bear anything herself, if she could thereby assist them. And whatever humiliation she had to suffer, no one ever heard a word of complaint or murmuring against anyone, as she was ready to help even those who had been the cause of it. She often said: "I cannot understand how a spouse of Christ crucified can fly from the cross and not love it, for she at the same time flies from Him who carried it for love of us, making it the object of all His desires." "We can only love Him in proportion as we love His Cross."

"Charity inspires us with consideration in our dealings with others, but above all *non cogitat malum*, it thinks no evil, and speaks none."

"I will never try to find out the faults of others, and when I am obliged to speak of them I will do it in the charity of the Sacred Heart, putting myself in their place and asking myself if I should like others to do that, or speak so of me. And when I shall see a fault com-

mitted, whether against charity, humility, or any other virtue, I will offer to the Eternal Father the virtue of the Sacred Heart which is opposed to the fault, to repair it and to obtain grace that the person may amend. I will try never to judge my neighbour. May God grant me this grace."

Margaret Mary took this resolution in the early days of her religious life. She was so faithful that, towards the end when she bound herself to do what was most perfect, she was not afraid to include it in the number of the points which her vow was to cover. She renewed it in almost the same words.

"I will look on all who annoy me or speak evil of me as my best friends, and I will try to do them all the good I can."

CHAPTER VIII

CONSTANCY

THE life of strife and sacrifice imposed by the religious state is always painful to nature. Sometimes the Spouse of Christ seems overcome by fatigue, and if she is not watchful, she may easily fall into apathy and indifference and be content with what is mediocre.

Margaret Mary warned her daughters against this danger: "If you wish to satisfy the Heart of Our Lord and become His true disciples you must renounce all natural reasonings, which means, that you must not resist grace when you are inspired to practise virtue, either in order to do good, or to avoid evil. You must bravely follow its leading notwithstanding natural repugnances, for you must not forget that the grace which seems so insistent now will weaken little by little and withdraw itself from you, leaving you cold and unmoved by your own apathy. It will be useless to seek for it again; the Sacred Heart will treat you as you treated His grace. May God keep you from this misery. I tell you this, so that you may guard against it. Think often of these words: 'To-day if you shall hear His voice harden not your heart.'"

"Be faithful to God, to your Rule, and to yourself: to *God*, by giving Him your love and your whole heart; do not allow your affections to be spent on creatures, nor on earthly things: to your *Rule*, preferring it to all else, and never neglecting any part, no matter how small: to *yourself*, using time well, each moment according to duty, with the same pure love as though it were to be the last of your life."

"Be constant in the practice of what you know is

right, for you know enough to make you a great saint, which I hope you will become, by grace and your own fidelity. For this you must place all your confidence in Our Lord, going to Him in all your needs, telling Him simply all your troubles as a child to its Father, for we all became His children on the tree of the Cross, therefore He will never abandon you if you do not first leave Him, which I feel sure you will never do."

"Place all your confidence in God and never doubt His mercy, which surpasses all our miseries. Throw yourself into His arms or into His Heart, being perfectly submissive to all He wills for you. Do not allow yourself to be depressed by your sorrows and dryness, but bear them in the spirit of penance, as we have to with all that goes against our inclinations. I do not know why I say so much to you, for I think all this and more is contained in the resolutions you showed me; therefore I exhort you to keep them faithfully, for God is not mocked. It would have been better not to promise than to do so and not to keep your word; you condemn yourself in your own writing. Love constantly the Heart of our divine Master, ask His advice in your difficulties, for His strength in your weaknesses, and for His help in all you do or suffer. As far as you possibly can, imitate His humility and sweetness in dealing with others, especially with any towards whom you may feel an aversion; be with them more cordial and kind. Love those who annoy you, for they help more to your sanctification than those who flatter you. Keep your intentions pure and never commit a wilful fault; try to become a true daughter of our Blessed Lady, and a perfect disciple of the Sacred Heart. I beg of Our Lord with my whole heart, that He will so fill you with His spirit that you may have no memory except for Him, no understanding unless it be employed about Him, and no will to love anything but Him. My heart is full of affection for you, and I

beg of you not to forget before God this frail sinner who writes, but to beg for her perfect conversion from Our Lord."

When a religious became careless Margaret Mary knew well how to speak severely and recall to her mind the judgments of God. "My dear Sister, I can no longer hide from you the pain I feel at your conduct. It is impossible to love as I love you in the Sacred Heart and not feel in my heart an interest in all that concerns you. This is what gives me the confidence to risk writing this letter to pray you to tell me the truth as to your dispositions, for I will not trust my own thoughts nor many things I have heard said about you. I acknowledge my heart is filled with sorrow, but, dear Sister, allow me to speak openly to you and fulfil the promise you asked me to make, which was to tell you sincerely my thoughts about you. I feel Our Lord cannot be pleased with your conduct, and I fear much He will become weary of your resistance and, after having tried in vain to gain your heart, knocking constantly at the door, without being able to enter, He may retire leaving you to your enemies, for you know well He will not accept a divided heart. He will possess all or leave all. I am sure that in the religious state you cannot be without light as to what He requires from you. Oh, what a punishment that servant incurs who knows the will of his Master but does not do it! I hope your good heart will not be offended at what I have said, but that you will think it well over, so as not to risk losing the crown destined for you nor the graces God has in store for you. If you do this, you will thank God at the hour of your death, which may not be as far off as you think. Let us begin in earnest to work at our sanctification, for no one can do it for us, for even He who made us without ourselves will not save us without ourselves. And is it possible that you would have the courage to refuse Him your heart? I cannot

believe it, for it only needs one real 'I will' to turn us entirely to God, who in His mercy will not refuse you the necessary strength to overcome your difficulties and weaknesses which cause you to separate yourself from Him. Have recourse to His loving goodness with great confidence and do not tire, for He wishes very much to bless you and is always ready to receive you if only you will return to Him with humility, if unhappily you have, even in small things, displeased Him. Do not give way to discouragement, dear Sister, but receive submissively the little trials divine Providence sends you, and try to use them well.

"I do not think God asks anything more from you than that you should faithfully perform what you have promised by your holy vows, which oblige you to live according to your Rule: for, alas! what shame we shall feel at the hour of death if it should be said of us, 'Throw off that dress which has only covered the semblance of a religious!' Let us often think of this, seriously, dear Sister, and strive to live stripped of all things like a good religious, not only of temporal conveniences, but also of consolation and spiritual joy, interior and exterior.

"A good religious ought to depend entirely upon God and on her Superior, so that she may be employed and disposed of as required, leaving herself entirely to divine Providence and holy obedience, desiring nothing and refusing nothing, being ready to suffer all without complaint. This is the true paradise of a religious soul."

CHAPTER IX

THE BETROTHED OF THE SACRED HEART

MARGARET Mary has told us herself what the dispositions of a young postulant about to receive the religious habit ought to be. She paints her own portrait. "Say often with the Prophet: 'What shall I render to the Lord for all He has rendered to me?' I will offer Him a continual sacrifice of my whole being as a homage of love and praise to His Sovereignty. And to this end I have chosen Him as the only object of my love, my heart's treasure and my soul's delight, desiring nothing in this life except to strive to conform myself more and more to my crucified Spouse. I will do this by dying to my own will and way, which I sacrifice not only to obedience but also by doing the will of others, when possible, of whom I will speak respectfully, and if I should see a fault committed by anyone I will in satisfaction offer to God the opposite virtue in the Sacred Heart. When I obey, it shall be in honour of the obedience of Our Lord to His priests. When I humble myself, it shall be in honour of the humiliations He practised; and when I mortify my senses it shall be to honour His mortifications. This, dear Sister, is what I had to say about your resolutions. I have said more than I intended, but I hope it will help you to be faithful. Beg this grace from the Sacred Heart on the day of your clothing; taking your heart, as though in your hands, offer it to Him, consecrate it to Him that He may reign there absolutely; beg of Him that you may love Him perfectly, never wilfully offend Him and carry His cross lovingly. If you commit some fault, give yourself a little penance such as to kiss the ground six times, saying: *Cor mundum crea in me*, etc., or you may say three Paters with your arms extended."

CHAPTER X

MARGARET MARY'S FAREWELL TO HER NOVICES

MARGARET MARY was relieved from the care of the novices. Her work was finished among these young chosen religious. Before leaving these dear souls, their gentle mistress wished to say some words in farewell, which reveal her whole heart. The Sacred Heart alone is the theme of this last discourse, and it is easy to see how this Heart is the only treasure of her soul, and how she had worked and prayed that It might also be that of her novices. Happy, a thousand times, novices formed by such a mistress!

"In saying farewell, my very dear Sisters, with all the love of my heart I beg of you by the love you bear to Our Lord to be faithful to Him, fulfilling carefully the promises you have made to Him, never doing anything you know will displease Him, and neglecting nothing that you know He asks. In this way you will not frustrate His designs for you nor hinder the outpouring of the graces which He wishes to give you, if you do not prevent Him by your ingratitude and infidelity, which would be a real torment to me. I would be ready to suffer anything to procure for you the grace of belonging entirely to Him, and of letting Him reign freely in your hearts. I therefore commit you to His care and loving guidance, and you may often say in your hearts: 'As the divine Heart is mine, what can be wanting to me? And as I am His, what can harm me?'

"I do not think that you can give Him a stronger sign of your love nor one more pleasing to Him than to invite Him to take up His abode in the place He has made, and delights in, viz., your heart, from which you must drive

any idols you have hitherto adored there, either pride, your own will, or any creature. And after having driven all enemies of the Sacred Heart from this chapel (for your hearts may be so named) you will cleanse and purify them from all stain, removing all inordinate inclinations. Then you will ornament them with purity of intention, which will be to please Him in everything."

"Then by profound humility you will dig the foundations for the throne on which the Sacred Heart may reign. This throne is divine Love, in the midst of which He is as a victim immolated and sacrificed to the glory of His Father.

"The ornaments of this throne must be rich and precious. The first must be the colour of gold, the charity which will make Him love you so much that He will allow you to possess Him, as His well-beloved Spouse, to whom He says lovingly: 'All that is Mine is thine, and all that is thine is Mine, for we are united by love.' The second ornament will be blue, which represents the meekness with which we shall speak to Him, on the strength of His love, as a friend with her friend, telling Him all our needs. The third shall be black, signifying the perfect mortification of our senses and our entire forgetfulness of self and of all that is not God. The fourth shall be green for the hope and confidence we shall have in His loving goodness, as children with their Father, who will never abandon them. The fifth shall be violet, signifying a profound silence, cutting off all useless words and thoughts in order to adore Him in silence as our King.

"The pavement of this chapel must be made of the love of our own abjection. The lamp, which you must always keep burning and feed with good works, is your love for this divine Heart. The clock will be an ardent fidelity which will summon all your senses and powers

to do Him homage. The canopy will be a holy serenity and peace which will always keep you calm, whatever happens, and submissive to God's will. The three powers of your soul shall be as three angels to render homage to Our Lord. Your mind shall only be employed in learning to know Him, your will in loving Him, offering Him constantly the incense of your affections, your desire to please Him and never to be separated from Him. Your memory shall be constantly occupied in rehearsing His benefits.

"The door of this chapel shall be a cross to signify that all those who enter there must be crucified, for we must reign from the cross before we enter into glory. The hinges which bear the door shall be submission and obedience which will enable you to be ready to suffer and bear all. The lock shall be: 'I will suffer without complaint, for the Heart of Jesus prevents any fear.' The key shall be a firm perseverance in the love and service of this loving Heart. The porter shall be the Presence of God, who will not allow anything to enter which might in the least soil or profane this holy chapel.

"The windows shall be the crystal of simplicity through which a lively faith shall shine, which will make you seek God purely, for love, referring all to the greater glory of His Sacred Heart, not caring about consolations or sweetness, but thanking God equally for all. Holy modesty shall ornament and keep clean this holy chapel. Ardent zeal for the honour of the Sacred Heart shall be the judge, who with penances will punish the profanations you may have committed, or allowed there.

"You must enter there three times every day. In the morning to offer your homage of adoration and sacrifice to this divine Heart, as to your Liberator, to whom you will sacrifice all that you do and suffer and your whole being, only using it to love, honour and glorify Him, uniting yourself to His holy intentions, renouncing all

that could displease Him. At noon you must enter to offer Him your homage of love and supplication. You will show Him all the wounds and miseries of your soul, who is your sovereign remedy, who alone can provide for all your needs. At night you will enter to offer Him your homage of gratitude, thanking Him for all His benefits and begging, with great sorrow, for His forgiveness for all your ingratitude and unfaithfulness, with a firm resolution to die rather than offend Him. You will then make a crown of the acts of virtue you have practised and offer it to Him to lessen the pain He receives from the thorns of our sins, begging of Him to repair the evil you have done by His good works. To take your rest in peace you must enter the Holy of Holies of the Sacred Heart, where you will enclose yourself with the key of absolute abandonment to His care.

"This is the description of the chapel which the Sacred Heart wishes you to erect in yourself. You may enter often to seek the riches of this holy Heart and to hide therefrom the stress of any present necessity. If you find yourself in an abyss of tepidity and cowardice you must take therefrom the ardent fervour of this Sacred Heart and then guide yourself by it. You will do thus in every other need, praying Him to give you the grace you require at the moment. When you feel troubled or afraid on the stormy sea of this world where we are constantly overwhelmed by the waves of our passions and evil inclinations, say to your soul: 'Why dost thou fear? thou dost bear the Heart of Jesus and all His pure love, the treasure and delight of Heaven and earth.' At other times you might consider the Sacred Heart in this chapel, as a source of living water to revive the flowers of your garden which are drooping and restore their natural beauty, so that your soul may become the garden of His predilection. Beg Him, also, that after having been for you a source of living water He would also be a warm

vivifying sun, always bright and shining, so that causing virtues to grow He would dissipate the mists and darkness of your soul.

"And when you pray, enter this Sacred Heart as an oratory where you will find all you need to pay to God what you owe Him, offering Our Lord's prayer to supply your deficiencies, loving God with the love of this Sacred Heart, adoring Him with Its adoration, praising Him with Its praises, working with It always and willing all It wills. If you have any love for me you cannot show it better than by being constantly faithful to this Sacred Heart, who will be to you the source of every grace, if you only are constant. If on the contrary you are ungrateful, He will abandon you or seem insensible to your needs.

"Farewell then, my beloved Sisters, let us be always true to the Beloved of our souls. Let us give Him all our heart's love, affections, inclinations and tenderness. In Him I love you and wish you the most pure love possible for this divine Heart, which I supplicate to consume you in its fire. Remember it is to Our Lord that you have made so many promises, and that He is not mocked You must constantly strive to put them in practice, cost what it may. There must be no inordinate affection for any creature, nor for yourselves, but all must be for the Sacred Heart, who knows that though I have given you all to Him, I am still full of affection for you and ready for His love and glory to render you any service in my power."

Part III

ADVICE IN SUFFERING AND TEMPTATION

IN the fourth part of his *Introduction to a Devout Life* St. Francis de Sales strengthens Philothea in the difficulties and trials which are to be met with on the way to perfection.

These trials come from different causes. They may come from others: these often pass inconsiderate judgments on the doings of pious people. They may come from the devil, whose temptations are continual. They may come from our own nature, from its sadness and melancholy. They may come from God Himself, who allows our soul to be dry and tepid.

St. Margaret Mary teaches us, in her turn, how to find in the Sacred Heart the courage we need to fight against the world, the devil, our own evil tendencies, and the apparent severity of the Beloved of our souls. By following her we can extend the teaching of her holy Founder and give on the great law of suffering more precise ideas. St. Margaret Mary's writings shed on this severe law, for those who can understand them, a marvellous light. She will also be a sure guide in that other state of trial named temptation, which the Holy Spirit tells us is necessary for every soul that would please God. We will take up with her the subjects as they are treated by St. Francis de Sales.

We will divide them into two parts: the first will treat of suffering, the second of temptation.

SECTION I.—SUFFERING

CHAPTER I

THE SCIENCE OF SUFFERING

AFTER God nothing is more precious than His love and His cross. So the day on which Margaret Mary received the Heart of Jesus, His love and His cross, was for her a precious anniversary.

"On the feast of the beloved disciple of our divine Master, I remembered that it was on this day that my adorable Spouse granted me the incomparable grace of which I was so unworthy, of making me rest on His breast, with His beloved disciple, giving me His Heart, His cross and His love: His Heart to be my refuge, my strength and heavenly rest amidst the tempests of this world; His cross to be my throne of glory on which I must not only glory but also rejoice, for there can be no good for me except Jesus, His crosses and His love; He also gave me His love to purify, consume, and transform me into Himself."

The cross was often the subject of Margaret Mary's instructions to her disciples. "It would seem to me that I had said nothing to you if the cross of Our Blessed Lord had not been mentioned. Oh, how happy you are if you know how to carry, cherish, and bless it, for the love of Him who loved it so much for love of us, that He willed to die in its arms! Let us, therefore, wish to learn nothing but to love and suffer, and when we shall have learnt that perfectly, we shall know and do all that God asks of us.

"If we only understood well the value of the cross and the happiness of love, the cross would not be so much avoided, but it would be cherished and loved so

much that no pleasure would be found except in the cross, no rest except on the cross, and the one desire of pious souls would be to die on the cross, despised and abandoned by all. But for this to come to pass pure love must sacrifice and consume our hearts as it sacrificed and consumed That of our good Master."

What, then, is the mystery hidden in suffering which was revealed by the Sacred Heart to Margaret Mary, and which He wishes to reveal to us also? Let us meditate on it.

If the Sacred Heart is the Heart of the God of Charity it is also the Heart of the Man of Sorrows *par excellence*, *Vir dolorum*. He brought from Heaven the sacred fire of divine love, but upon the earth He only found pain. Whoever wishes to resemble the Sacred Heart must, like It, love and suffer.

In the work of redemption, love and suffering had their special part. By love Jesus redeemed us, but with pain, agony and death. And what pain, what agony, what a death! No child of Adam ever suffered so much. The Son of God willed to drink to the dregs the bitter chalice with which we will barely wet our lips. And since then, from the cross as from His chosen throne, He speaks to His disciples and says: "See if there is sorrow like unto My sorrow. And you born in sin, will you not suffer in future? Will you not suffer with Me? Will you not suffer as I suffer? Will you not suffer for Me?"

To suffer with Jesus is to suffer with resignation. To suffer as Jesus is to suffer with LOVE. To suffer for Jesus is to sacrifice yourself for Him as a victim to the Justice of His Father for the salvation of sinners. These are the three degrees of Christian patience in suffering.

Our Lord one day explained this to His Beloved. She tells us: "Feeling, one day, during meditation, a great desire to suffer, He held me close to Him, saying lovingly: 'Receive, My daughter, the cross I give thee, place it

in the centre of thy heart, keep it always before thy eyes, and carry it in the arms of thy affections. The hardest pain it will cause thee shall be unknown and continual, a hunger never satisfied, a thirst leaving thee still thirsty, and a burning desire with no refreshment.' Not understanding these words, I said to Our Lord: 'My God, let me understand what Thou dost wish me to do.' Our Lord said: 'To have the cross in thy heart is to be crucified in all things, to carry it in thy arms is to embrace it each time it presents itself, as the most precious pledge I could give thee in this life of My love. This continual hunger for suffering shall be to honour that which I had to honour My Eternal Father; this thirst shall be for Me and for the salvation of souls, in memory of that which I suffered on the tree of the cross.' "

CHAPTER II

WE MUST BE RESIGNED TO SUFFER

THE first degree of Christian patience is to accept suffering with a humble resignation, conforming our will to the will of God.

This resignation is a homage that God expects from His creature who thus recognizes His sovereign dominion over it, to which it abandons itself blindly. *Manus tuæ fecerunt me et plasmaverunt me et sic repente præcipitas me?* God keeps to Himself the right to plunge us into sadness of soul, pain of heart, sufferings of illness, agony of death, and the darkness of the tomb.

Margaret Mary recognized this sovereign dominion of the Sacred Heart over all, and with a confidence, like that of St. Gertrude or St. Mechtilde, she left to It the care of choosing for her sorrow or joy, life or death.

She tells us: "Once this only Love of my soul appeared before me carrying in one Hand a picture of the happiest life that a religious soul could desire, peace, interior and exterior consolations, perfect health, the applause and esteem of others and everything else that could be agreeable to nature. In the other Hand He held a picture of a poor and abject life, crucified by all kinds of humiliations and contempt, always suffering, body and mind. Offering me these two pictures, He said: 'Choose, my daughter, whichever of these two pictures you prefer. I will give you the same grace with one as with the other.' I threw myself at His Feet in adoration, saying: 'Oh, my Lord! I only wish for Thee, and whatever choice Thou shalt make for me.' He urged me much to make a choice. I said: 'Thou art sufficient for me, O my God! do with me whatever shall glorify Thee most, paying no attention to my interests or desires. If Thou art pleased

that is enough for me.' He then said that with Magdalen I had chosen the better part which should not be taken from me, as He Himself would be mine for ever. And, offering me the picture of the crucifixion, He said: 'Behold that which I have chosen, and what will please Me the most, both for the fulfilling of My designs over thee, and also make thee more like to Myself. The other picture represents a life of enjoyment and not of merit; that is for Heaven.' I therefore accepted the picture of death and crucifixion, kissing the Hand that gave it to me, and though nature shuddered I embraced it with all the affection of which my heart was capable, and, clasping it to my heart, I felt it so strongly imprinted in me that I seemed entirely penetrated with all I had seen represented thereon."

We see here this submissive soul accepting from her Spouse the life He judges best for her. She kneels at His feet expecting sorrow. The Holy Trinity must ratify the choice made by the Sacred Heart, and reward by a great grace this heroic resignation of the willing victim.

"Our Lord continuing His favours I received an incomparable grace. During a weakness which fell on me, the three Persons of the adorable Trinity came to me and poured great consolation into my soul. But being unable to explain what passed, I shall say nothing, except that it seemed to me that the Eternal Father, offering me a very heavy cross covered with thorns, and at the same time giving me the other instruments of the Passion, said: 'See, my daughter, I make thee the same present as I made My Beloved Son.' 'And I,' said my Lord Jesus Christ, 'will fasten thee to it as I was fastened, and will keep thee faithful company.' The third divine Person said that as He was Love, He would consume me in purifying me. My soul remained in wonderful joy and peace, for the impression made by these three divine

Persons has never been effaced. They were represented to me under the appearance of three young men clothed in white, shining with light and of the same age, dignity, and beauty. I did not understand it then, but I have seen since what great suffering all this signified."

The cross, a gift from God the Father, like to that of His Son! The cross, the meeting-place with the Sacred Heart! The cross, the furnace in which the Holy Spirit purifies souls by love! Whoever understands these mysteries will accept the most cruel trials with joy. Margaret Mary had this happiness. She looked on the cross as the most precious pledge that the Sacred Heart could give her, in this life, of His love.

"Our Lord," she says, "grants me many graces, unworthy as I am, but that which I prize most is the conformity He gives me with His humble and suffering life. He helps me to keep in so complete a state of indifference that I do not trouble in whatever condition He places me; if He is content, that is enough. And this is the thought that continually occupies me. The cross is my glory, love leads me to it. Love fills my heart, and is sufficient for me."

If St. Margaret Mary does not always exact from the disciples of the Sacred Heart that they should be like her, victims entirely sacrificed, she at least asked from them a perfect submission to the divine will.

"I received a great consolation," she says, "in hearing of the pleasure you have given Our Lord by accepting His cross with joy and submission. In case you should be alarmed, He has covered it with roses, but that ought not to give you most pleasure, but rather that you feel the pricks of the thorns under them. Our Lord will then delight in you and make you like Himself, and help you to see that He is no less loving in the bitterness of Calvary than in the sweetness of Thabor. As Our Lord wishes you to honour His Life of sacrifice in the Blessed

Sacrament you must bear perseveringly the cross He gives you, either interior or exterior, without ever complaining or being tired of its length or weight. Is it not enough for you to know that it is given by the hand of a friend, whose loving Heart had destined it for you from all eternity in order to make you His victim, immolated and sacrificed to His entire will without resistance? In this state He only asks of you acts of submission. Nothing displeases Him so much as your anxiety and discouragement. What can you fear? Is He not powerful enough to support you? Why also do you keep back anything he asks? Allow Him to do His will with you, and be content to suffer in loving Him. He wishes you to love Him above all and by entirely forgetting yourself. You must never be hindered by thinking: 'What will they say?' but do everything to please the Sacred Heart, according to the light He gives you. He loves you and will never let you perish; as long as you place your confidence in Him, you shall then feel His power in your need."

CHAPTER III

THE SACRED HEART OUR STRENGTH

THIS conformity to the will of God, who sends pain, is sometimes difficult. Where shall we find the strength to say our *Fiat?* In love and in prayer.

"As love only can give us the desire of being like our Sovereign Master, so we can only attain our wish by loving Him above all things and despising all the rest, as did His true and loving Magdalen, whom I beg to obtain for us the same fire that consumed her heart, when she knelt at our Saviour's Feet. May He never find in us any resistance to His adorable will or any wish to thwart His designs over us. To a loving soul, affliction or consolation, health or sickness, are all equally welcome as long as Our Lord is content, as it only wishes to please Him; and you know, my dearest Sister, better than I do, that as He can find nothing great out of Himself, He takes pleasure in lowering His greatness to our littleness, so that He may be glorified by our weakness; and I acknowledge frankly that when I pray for you at Holy Mass, I could not ask that the cross should be taken from you, for it would be like depriving you of the greatest happiness we can have in this life, which is our conformity to our suffering Saviour. Neither could I ask Him to take from you this aversion for sickness, because I think this increases our merit, as the less there is of ourselves the more there is of God. But if I may say plainly my thought about you, when I offer you to the adorable Heart, I think what He asks of you is blind submission to His whole will, and to all His designs over you.

"As to the desire you have to obtain from Our Lord a perfect submission to the dispositions of His Providence,

I promise, with our Mother's permission, to say, for a month for this intention, the litany of the Blessed Sacrament, and I will begin the 1st day of August, with Holy Communion.

"I beg you, therefore, to unite your prayers to mine, for we shall obtain nothing unless you have confidence; and believe me, dearest Sister, that now and always, it is a pleasure to prove to you how sincerely I love you, in the Sacred Heart, which, by Its holy love, has united us for time and eternity."

"Many objections might easily come to one's mind against suffering. One more specious than the rest is, perhaps, this: 'If I were not prevented by suffering I could consecrate myself to the service of God and to works of charity, whereas now I am useless.' Oh, what a serious objection! As if God had need of us for His glory or for the good of others. This divine will is manifested in the sufferings of the Rev. F. de la Colombière; for having prayed for him, Our Lord said to me that the servant was not greater than his Master, and there was nothing better for him than to become like that dear Master. And though, according to human judgment, his health might seem more to the glory of God, his sufferings gained much more; for everything has its appointed time. There is a time for suffering, and one for working; there is a time for sowing, and another for watering and cultivating. This is what he is doing; for Our Lord, at present, takes pleasure in giving great merit to his sufferings, as they are united to His, in order to shower down graces like a heavenly dew on the seed he has sown in so many places and to make it grow and increase His holy love. Let us, therefore, dear Mother, submit with joy to the will of our Sovereign and confess, notwithstanding all that seems hard to us, that He is good and just in all He does, and deserves at all times praise, love, and glory. If I could

only tell you how much He urges me to love Him with a love of conformity to His suffering life! As He invites me always to be sacrificing myself for Him, He Himself provides the opportunities and the occupation He has given me, where I see with pleasure that each action is a new pain, by the dislike I feel for it, which gives so much satisfaction to the Spirit which dwells in me, that I feel often obliged to say, notwithstanding all natural opposition, that it is good to walk in the strength of His love, in a road distasteful to nature, without any other satisfaction than that of having none. It ought to suffice for us that Our Lord is content, and does His own will."

To whom can we go for strength and consolation in suffering? We may, of course, make known our sorrow and sadness to those who are near us, and above all to him who has care of our soul. But in these consolations that we seek from creatures, we must be on our guard. The cross is a precious balm which loses its sweetness before God, if too much exposed; therefore, we must hide it and as much as possible carry it in silence. Margaret Mary added her own example to this lesson. Three times the Sacred Heart sent her the fearful pain in her finger known by the name of whitlow. She had received it as a precious ring from her Spouse. The violence of the pain obliged her to spend some nights near the fire, bearing real torture. The pain had already lasted some weeks, and no one would have known of it, if one of the boarders had not noticed that she rose from her bed every night. The Superior being told, asked to see the finger and why she had not been informed. "It is such a little thing, dear Mother, it was not worth mentioning." Seeing that it was worse than Margaret Mary thought, the Superior sent for the physician. As soon as he saw it, he said the surgeon must be sent for to lance the finger. He came and opened it to the bone without the patient saying one word or making the least

complaint, which much edified the doctors. The surgeon was still more edified each day, when, notwithstanding the great pain he was obliged to cause her, she made no sign of feeling it, which made him say it was a good thing to be a saint. Everyone admired her patience; she was unwilling even to be pitied, when others showed how grieved they were for her suffering. Mother Greyfie, having written to her on the subject, she sent the following reply:

"I hasten to tell you, my dear Mother, that I could not experience a greater pleasure than I do, when you speak to me of divine love in suffering. I feel sad in thinking that so far I have not suffered anything purely from love. It must be in punishment for my sins that I cannot have the smallest cross but everyone is told of it, and often God is offended. This is a great sorrow to me, and makes me think that all creatures must feel a great horror of me and that they can punish the sins I commit or of which I am the cause. So I may tell you that I have the joy of receiving no other consolation from creatures than crosses and humiliations. I was never richer. I tell you this for yourself, so that you may thank the Sacred Heart for me and beg that I may have the grace to use so great a treasure profitably. If I could arrange things otherwise I would not do it, except to omit anything that might displease Our Lord, and for the rest I only want what God allows for my humiliation. All my joy is in the Sacred Heart of my divine Master. You would scarcely believe it, my good Mother, but nature is so happy when it is flattered and pitied; and that prevents me feeling much the suffering of my finger, though they were always telling me how much I suffered! I felt they might be laughing at me, seeing one feels so slight a pain, but I have also learnt that nature loves these attentions. It cannot bear to suffer humiliation and contempt from creatures, without

support. It is, nevertheless, what pure love exacts, and without it our sufferings are not worthy of the name.

"With love and resignation the Sacred Heart also asks for silence. Love, suffering, and silence! may these three words be the motto of the disciple of the Sacred Heart when he is on the cross. Offering you yesterday to the Sacred Heart, the words came to my mind: 'That she may be faithful to her duties, suffering all she finds there, without complaint, for she cannot be one of the perfect friends of My Heart until she has been purified and tried in the fire of suffering.' Suffer therefore and be patient, doing the divine will to which you ought always to be sacrificed, with a firm trust that the Sacred Heart will never abandon you, for Our Lord is nearer to you when you are suffering than when you rejoice. Do not think so often about yourself. It ought to be the same thing to us whether we suffer or rejoice, provided God's will is done."

CHAPTER IV

WE MUST LOVE SUFFERING

"ALAS! I am ashamed to say that I love it, for I have nothing to suffer, or it is so little, that it is a real martyrdom to me. To wish to love God without suffering is only an illusion."

To love and desire the cross, this is the second degree of Christian patience. We must ask the Sacred Heart to explain to us the meaning of this love and desire which are so opposed to the aspirations of our hearts. "I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized, and how am I straightened until it be accomplished!" And this baptism was the baptism of the Cross; it was innumerable sorrows and humiliations, a terrifying agony and a death more terrifying still! And the Sacred Heart was impatient until they came to pass! It suffered from the delay!

A loving heart can easily guess the secret of such a desire. St. Margaret Mary says: "Love reigns in suffering. Jesus has loved us, but love must give a proof of its presence and the best proof is sorrow. Jesus has loved us, but love must save us and suffering is the means of salvation. Jesus has loved us, but love makes us wish to be like those we love, and we, the well-beloved of Jesus, are subject to many sorrows. In His love Our Lord is drawn to all suffering and He will receive all as proofs of His love, as means of our salvation and as traces of His likeness to us."

By an admirable disposition of His Providence Our Lord has also willed that suffering should also be the proof of our love for Him. Since His Death on the cross suffering has been the means by which we may become

like our crucified God. So when a soul is inflamed with love for Him, is it surprising that it longs to suffer?

This desire for suffering was one of the characteristic marks of St. Margaret Mary's sanctity. When still a child in her father's house she threw herself at the foot of the crucifix saying: "Oh, my dear Saviour, how happy I should be if Thou would impress on me Thy suffering image." And Our Lord replied: "That is what I intend to do, if only thou dost not resist and dost contribute thy share!" When she had entered the order of the Visitation her desire of suffering only increased, and she tenderly complained to Our Lord that He did not satisfy her. "O my God," she said, "wilt Thou leave me always without suffering?"

"At first a great cross was shown me of which I could not see the end. It was entirely covered with flowers. But Our Lord made me hear, at the same time, these words: 'Behold the couch of My chaste spouse, where I will cause thee to consummate the delights of My pure love. Little by little these flowers shall fall and the thorns, hidden now because of thy weakness, shall alone remain, but thou shalt feel so sensibly their pricks that thou shalt need all the strength of My love to enable thee to bear them.'" These words gave her great joy as she thought she could never suffer enough to satisfy her thirst for pain, which gave her no rest night or day. As much as consolations were a trial to her, so much the more did the cross give her joy. She would have wished to weigh down her body with work and penance; austerities seemed nothing to a heart which could not live a moment without the holiness of love which had caused three flames to burn in her heart: one to suffer, the second to love God and to receive Holy Communion, the third to die, so that she might be united to Him. Time and place were nothing to her, as her Beloved accompanied her everywhere, and what she was told to do was likewise of no

importance, feeling sure she would meet with suffering which she would bear in silence, without consolation, help or compassion. Our Lord was very liberal in giving her the sufferings she craved for. He gave her to understand one day after Holy Communion, that as often as she met with a cross and placed it, for love of Him, in her heart, so often would He enter her heart and make His Presence felt.

Margaret Mary says: "I do not understand how a spouse of Jesus crucified can live without loving and accepting His cross, for if she does she despises Him who bore it for our love, making it the object of all His desires. We can only love Him in proportion as we love the cross."

To this spouse, according to His Heart, Our Lord showed, as to St. Catherine, a crown of thorns. He willed to give it to her. "Going one morning to Holy Communion, the Sacred Host appeared to me shining like the sun so that I could not bear the light from it, and Our Lord in the centre holding a crown of thorns. He placed it on my head, shortly after I had received Him, saying: 'Receive, my daughter, the crown as a pledge of that which shall shortly be given to thee, in conformity with Me.' I did not understand what was meant; but I learnt soon after by what followed, as I received two violent blows on my head so that I felt as though my head was crowned with thorns, the pain of which would only end with my life, for which I gave great thanks to God who grants such great graces to His weak victim. But alas! as I often say, victims ought to be innocent, and I am a sinner. I confess I felt more grateful to my Lord for the precious crown than if He had presented me with all the diadems of the earth, so much the more as no one can take it from me, and that it forces me often to watch and entertain myself with my only Love, not being able to rest my head on a pillow, in imitation of my good Master, who could not rest His Head when

fastened to the cross. This gave me inconceivable joy and consolation, seeing I had some likeness to Him. He willed that I should ask the Eternal Father, by the merits of His thorny crown, to which I united mine, for the conversion of sinners, for humility, for those proud spirits whose arrogance was injurious and displeasing to Him."

Our Blessed Lord knew, however, how to mitigate the severity of the cross. At first He visited His spouse and filled her with consolation.

She tells us: "When He was going to bestow on me new crosses, He prepared me for them by an outpouring of sweetness and spiritual joy, so great that had they lasted I could not have borne them. At these times I said: 'Oh, my only Love, I sacrifice to Thee all these joys. Keep them for holy souls who will glorify Thee more than I will do. I wish for Thee only, stripped of all on the cross, where I wish to love Thee, Thee alone, for the love of Thyself. Take from me all else, so that I may love Thee without any seeking for self-interest or pleasure.' And it was at these times that, like a wise and experienced director, He opposed my desires, making me rejoice when I should have wished to suffer. All, however, came from Him and everything was a gift from His pure mercy."

We might ask: Ought not this generous soul to have been pitied when she shared to such a degree her divine Spouse's chalice of bitterness? we say a thousand times, no, for love transforms the greatest bitterness into joy.

"I cannot understand that a soul suffers really when it truly loves the Sacred Heart of Our Lord, for He has changed the greatest hardships into joys, and the heaviest pains and humiliations into pleasure. But if the desire only to love this divine Heart produces this effect, what is the state of those souls who love Him truly and whose

greatest pain is that they have not enough to suffer or do not love enough? I believe that for a soul, burning with this flame, everything is changed into love, so that it has no other occupation than to love in suffering. Let us, therefore, love our divine Master, but let us love Him on the cross, for He desires to find in our hearts love, suffering, and silence."

Happy Margaret Mary, poor weak woman, become, as she says herself, full of pains and suffering, without remedy or help nor anyone to turn to except this divine Heart! But if she was full of pain, she was full of love; she did not deny it—full of joy, as she tells us. "The cross is my treasure, in the adorable Heart of my Jesus; in it I place all my pleasure, all my joy, and all my desires. My soul seems sometimes reduced to an agony and at the last extremity, notwithstanding the happiness it feels in being submerged in this sea of bitterness, which I regard as the greatest gift of my divine Spouse.

"When I see my sufferings increase, I think I feel within me the same kind of joy that is felt by avaricious or ambitious people when their desires are satisfied. Therefore, I look upon every hour passed by me without suffering as lost, and I only wish to live that I may have the happiness of suffering. This alone is able to rejoice my heart and my soul, and to speak of it to those I love. I have no other news to tell, for all other conversation is distasteful to me, and no other grace to be compared to that of carrying the cross for love of Jesus Christ."

CHAPTER V

SUFFERING IN UNION WITH THE SACRED HEART

BY suffering and death the Son of God saved the world. Salvation for men comes from the cross and the Blood of the Sacred Heart. *Crucifixus etiam pro nobis.*

From the first instant of His Incarnation Our Lord accepted the condition of a victim. "Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldst not, but a body Thou hast fitted to me. Holocausts for sin did not please Thee. Then said I, Behold I come, in the head of the book it is written of me that I should do Thy will, my God."

With this disposition He began His human life. With this disposition He offered Himself in the Temple. Mary knew it, but learnt it again from Simeon. A sword was to pierce her immaculate heart.

With this disposition He began to teach. St. John, who was to make Him known, only sees in Him the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world.

Above all, it was with this disposition that He went to Gethsemane, and on Calvary He became the Victim, the perfect Victim. And now He turns to generous souls and asks if they will become victims with Him and like Him, to repair the glory of His Father and save the souls of sinners.

Mary, Virgin Immaculate, answers His appeal. With Him she is priest, with Him she is victim. Jesus is the Man of sorrows, Mary, the Mother of sorrows. Jesus is the salvation of sinners, Mary will be their refuge.

In the Church of God there have always been souls associated with Jesus and Mary as victims. Devotion

to the Sacred Heart will bring many recruits to this regiment of chosen souls.

After St. Gertrude and St. Mechtilde, St. Margaret Mary was to share in this work of her divine Master. As apostle of the Sacred Heart He wills her to be a victim.

"I must tell you that Our Lord appeared to His unworthy slave and said: 'I seek a victim for my Heart, whom I will sacrifice as a host to accomplish Its designs.' Then, feeling myself penetrated with the majesty of this Sovereign Lord, I threw myself at His feet and offered Him several holy souls who corresponded faithfully to His designs. He said: 'I will not have anyone but thee, and I wish thee to consent to what I ask.' With many tears I replied that He knew well I was a sinner, and that victims should be innocent, but that I could only do as my Superior allowed me, to which He consented. He continued to importune me, and I to resist because I feared so much these extraordinary graces, which prevented me from following the common life. But it was all in vain. He gave me no rest, until by the orders of my Superiors I had offered myself for all He required of me, which was to become a victim destined to endure all kinds of sufferings, humiliations, contradictions, sorrows, and contempt, without seeking anything except to accomplish His will." Our divine Lord willed that Margaret Mary should be a victim for sinners. She tells us: "When Our Lord honoured me with one of His visits, He said: 'Daughter, wilt thou not give Me thy heart in which My suffering love may find rest, despised as it is by all?' I replied: 'My Lord, Thou knowest I am entirely Thine, do with me what Thou wilt.' He then said: 'Dost thou really know why I bestow so abundantly My graces on thee? It is to make thy heart a sanctuary where My love may continually burn. Thy heart is like a sacred altar that may be touched by no stain. I have chosen it, on which to

offer to My Father burning sacrifices to appease His justice and give Him great glory, by the offering thou shalt make of Me in these sacrifices united with thine.'

" Since that time I have felt a fire so strong and burning that I wished with all my heart I could communicate it to every soul so that my God might be loved. In this state my occupation was to do as my divine Master had ordered. To do this I threw myself on the ground so as to offer Him to His Eternal Father, hiding myself in my nothingness, so that I might give glory to His greatness."

Margaret Mary is now united to her divine Master in His work. This was to satisfy the justice of God and appease Him for the sins of mankind. More than this, Margaret Mary was to live in a state of perpetual sacrifice. She understood it well, and devoted herself unceasingly to the salvation of souls. " I do not trouble," she says, " when He refuses my requests, but as I am striving for Him, I sometimes take the sins of these souls on myself, and so have a long and trying period of suffering. These sufferings occupy me constantly since (unless I am mistaken) He destined me to be the victim of His divine Heart and His immolated host, sacrificed to His good pleasure by a pure suffering love."

This work of intercession for sinners was perpetual. The gentle victim sometimes went through terrible anguish. God caused her to feel the misery of a lost soul in the desolation it would experience at the hour of death. Our Lord also once showed her one of these unhappy souls. She felt so great a fear that she threw herself on her face and stayed there for a long time, being unable to overcome her astonishment. She then offered herself to divine Justice to suffer all It demanded, so that Our Lord would not abandon this soul in His just anger, which being turned now on her, she found her soul in great anguish and desolation. When she raised her eyes she saw an angry God, in His Hands

whips and scourges which were meant for her. On the other side, hell seemed open ready to receive her. Everything in her soul was in revolt and confusion. She was assaulted on every side by violent temptations, above all by that of despair. She suffered great pains without being able to explain them, her tears fell constantly and the words on her lips were always: "How terrible it is to fall into the Hands of the living God!" At other times she threw herself on the ground, crying out: "Strike, O my God, cut, burn, and destroy all that displeases Thee. Do not spare, neither my body nor my life, provided Thou dost eternally save this soul." She could not have borne for long so painful a state, if Our Lord's loving Mercy had not sustained her in the severity of His Justice.

A victim is destined to pass by the sword and the fire and to shed the last drop of its blood. After a long persecution from the devil, Margaret Mary found herself overflowing with consolation. Her Lord, after having given her this rest, traced for her the plan of her immolated life. "He wished that I should be continually making acts of sacrifice, and for that purpose He told me He would increase my susceptibility and repugnances, so that I should do nothing without pain, so as to give me an opportunity of sacrifice even in small and indifferent things. This I have since experienced. He added that I should find no sweetness except in the bitterness of Calvary, and that in all that meant joy, pleasure, and happiness for others should be for me only a martyrdom of suffering. He fulfilled this promise in a striking way, for all that may be called pleasure became for me a torment. Even in the little recreations sometimes given, I suffered more than if I had been in a burning fever, for He willed I should take part in everything, like the Community. This made me say: 'O my Sovereign Good, this pleasure costs much!' The refec-

tory and going to bed gave me such pain that when the time approached I could only groan and weep. But the employments and the parlour were above all insupportable to me, and I never remember going without it costing me real violence to overcome my repugnance, and often I had to kneel down and ask God to give me the grace to conquer myself. Writing was also painful to me, not because I did it kneeling, but because of the repugnance I felt. I suffered more from the esteem, praise, and applause of others than the most vain and ambitious person could suffer from humiliations, contempt, and scorn, which made me say: 'O my God, do Thou rather allow all the powers of hell to be against me than that the tongues of creatures should praise and flatter me; rather would I prefer that all humiliations, sorrows, and troubles fall upon me.'

"Our Lord gave me a great thirst for these opportunities of suffering, though sometimes I allowed others to see how much I felt them. It made me sad to see how little humility and mortification I had, so that I could not suffer without letting others know; my only consolation was in the love of my own abjection which made me return thanks to my divine Lord that He allowed others to see me as I really was. He also willed that I should receive all as coming from Him without seeking anything, and I had to renounce all, thanking Him for sufferings as for joys, and when sorrowful or humiliating occasions befell me I would think that I deserved all this and more, offering the pain for the persons who inflicted it. He told me always to speak of Him with great respect, of my neighbour with esteem and compassion, and never of myself, or very little and then with contempt, except when for His glory He wished me to speak otherwise. I was to attribute all good and glory to His Sovereign Greatness, and to myself all evil, seeking no consolation out of Him and being ready to renounce it, when sent

by Him. I was to be attached to nothing, to see myself stripped of all. Loving only Him, in Him and by Him seeing Him in all things and the interests of His glory in a perfect forgetfulness of self. And, although He wished me to do all my actions for Him, He wished that in each there should be something directed expressly for His divine Heart. For instance, when I was at recreation He willed me to give Him His recreation by sorrow, humiliation, and mortifications which He took care to provide, and which for this reason I was to receive with pleasure. The same applied to the refectory. He wished me to sacrifice to Him whatever appeared the best to me and so with every other exercise. He also forbade me ever to judge, accuse, or condemn anyone but myself. He gave me many other instructions and, as their number astonished me, He told me I had nothing to fear, as He was a good Master and as powerful to help in doing what He taught, as wise in teaching and governing. I can affirm that whether I liked it or not He saw that I did what He required."

The great Master of Sacrifice exacted, therefore, that Margaret Mary should be a perpetual victim in all her actions. He did not allow her to escape from the blows given her by love. She says: "I could not lie on my left side, being unable to breathe. Once, feeling desirous to relieve the pain in the shoulder, I tried to turn on that side. Our Lord said that when He carried His cross He did not seek ease by exchanging it from one side to the other. That made me understand that I must renounce all idea of seeking comfort."

CHAPTER VI

THE THREE DESIRES

THE soul devoted to the Sacred Heart has three persecutors: the desire to love, the desire to suffer, and the desire to die. St. Margaret Mary tells us: "He has placed in my soul three persecutors who torment me continually. The first, cause of the other two, is so great a desire to love Him that it seems to me all should be changed into flames of love, so that He might be loved in His divine Sacrament. It is a martyrdom to me to remember He is so little loved, and that there are so many hearts who reject His love through forgetfulness and in contempt. If, at least, I loved Him my heart would be comforted in its sorrow, but I am the most ungrateful and unfaithful of all, for I had led a pleasure-loving life, seeking self. I feel continually urged to suffer, with a terrible repugnance in the inferior part of my soul, which makes my crosses so heavy and painful that I should fall many times if the Sacred Heart of my Jesus did not come to my assistance. And my heart is always thirsting for suffering in the midst of it all, and my soul is in an agony because it cannot yet be separated from my body. I have no greater sacrifice to make than that of living, and yet I accept it until the day of judgment if God so wills it, although to be separated from my greatest Good is harder than a thousand deaths. Everything is a trouble to me, because I cannot love purely my only Love, who is always present within me. He tells me Himself to explain myself to you in this manner. It is as if some powerful king, anxious to show his love, cast his eyes over all his subjects in order to choose the poorest, the most destitute and the most miserable; and then having found what he sought, he

should enrich her with a profusion of his gifts and favours, the greatest of which should be that this king would always walk by the side of this poor creature, holding a torch and magnificently attired in his royal purple. After having allowed himself to be seen, he would hide the light so as to give more confidence to his poor subject to approach him, to speak to him and hear his replies, give and receive caresses, providing at the same time for all her needs. Oh, if at this time this destitute person should turn against her benefactor and be unfaithful, and for all punishment he only brought forth again the torch that was hidden, that she might see who is by her side, and who he is of himself, the king in his glory, and she in her rags and filth and misery! If, at the same time, she saw the malice and ingratitude she had returned for the goodness of this king! Do I explain my meaning clearly enough?

"This is, in some way, my divine Lord's manner of dealing with His vile slave. His divine Presence in my soul has different effects. Sometimes it raises me to the heights of bliss and I can scarcely say 'My love, my life, and my all! Thou art all mine and I am all Thine.' At other times He allows me to fall into the abyss of my nothingness where I endure an extraordinary confusion, seeing this abyss of all kinds of misery near to the abyss of all greatness and perfection. At other times He seems to be with me in such a way that I have no being nor life but Himself, which is sometimes very painful and makes me say: 'I will suffer without complaining, for pure love expels fear.' At other times my soul seems to be a clear, quiet water in which the sun delights to be reflected. But I should only weary you if I tried to explain all these things in detail, as God is an incomprehensible abyss of all good. As He has told me, all my happiness must consist in being the plaything of His adorable Heart, which is my only Treasure, for I acknow-

ledge to you, my good Mother, that I have nothing but Him. He often says to me: 'What wouldst thou do without Me? Thou wouldst be poor indeed.'

"I receive other graces and favours from His bounty which are very great, but the Giver is better than all His gifts, and my heart can only love and attach itself to Him. All the rest is nothing and often only prevents the purity of the love we owe Him, and makes a third between the soul and its Beloved, who will be loved without any division. And when the three persecutors cease to torment, the soul, astonished, knows not where it is. It is the sign of departure. I do not know what to think of the state in which I now find myself; up to the present I have experienced these desires so strongly that I looked upon them as three tyrants who made me suffer a continual martyrdom without allowing me a moment's respite. These three desires I have already stated. But now I find myself in a great tranquillity of heart and in an absence of desires, which surprises me. I fear that this apparent peace may be only the effect of insensibility in which God sometimes leaves unfaithful souls, and I am afraid that through my great ingratitude for His graces, I have drawn down this punishment on my soul, which may be a kind of abandonment and reprobation. I feel I can no longer will or desire anything in this world, although I see well I possess no virtues. I wish sometimes I could grieve for this, but I find it is not in my power, so to say, to act any more. I can only feel an entire submission to God's will and a great joy in suffering. What consoles me, now and then, is the thought that, if I allow Him, Our Lord will Himself do all for me, He will act, He will love, and He will desire for me and supply all my defects."

CHAPTER VII

LOVE OF PERSECUTORS

OUR Lord said we must accept the chalice which His Heavenly Father sends us. But, alas! how often we look angrily on the messengers by whom He sends it! And yet it was not thus that Our Lord acted when Judas, Caiaphas, Herod, and the Jews gave Him to drink of His Chalice! He prayed, suffered, and died for them; he loved them excessively. Jesus willed that His spouse should have the same love for those who persecuted her, with an advantage over Him, which He caused her to remark. He suffered from wicked men, she suffered from holy people. "I do thee great honour, my daughter, in using such noble instruments to crucify thee; My Eternal Father allowed cruel and wicked executioners to crucify Me; and I, for thy crucifixion, use those who are devoted and consecrated to Me, in whose power I have placed thee and for whose salvation I will that thou shouldst offer all that they cause thee to suffer." "I did this," says St. Margaret Mary, "with all my heart, offering myself to bear the punishment of any sin they might commit in persecuting me, though it seemed to me they could do no injustice in making me suffer, not being able to do to me as much as I deserved. But I delight so much in speaking of the happiness of suffering that I could write volumes without satisfying my desire. And my self-love loves much this kind of discourse."

Therefore, Margaret Mary accepted the cross from the Hand of God and blessed those who gave it to her. She writes to Mother Greyfie that nothing causes her to feel greater affection for this Mother than her conduct towards her, of which she cannot think without great

gratitude. This Superior had never denied her the delicious bread of suffering and humiliation, though she knew well how bitter it was to nature. It was not only for holy souls, who tried her from motives of duty, that Margaret Mary had such sentiments, but also for malicious persons. A storm was raised against her because she had sent away from the noviciate a young girl of good family who had no vocation. Margaret Mary bore with her usual patience the annoyances this action brought on her, but her novices, who had not so much virtue, took on themselves the defence of their holy Mistress. This caused reproaches full of bitterness against her unjust persecutors. As soon as Margaret Mary knew of this she wrote to her novices this admirable letter:

"I cannot express to you the sorrow I feel at the bad use we are making of such a precious opportunity of showing our divine Lord our love and fidelity. He has Himself allowed this cross to come to us to prepare us for His Feast, and instead of lovingly embracing it we only try to avoid it and shake it off. And being unable to do this we commit many faults which grieve His divine Heart and make Him angry with us. Whence comes this except from the great love we bear ourselves, which makes us fear to lose our good reputation and the esteem we desire others to have for us? This causes us to try and justify ourselves, being ourselves always innocent and others guilty, thinking we are right and others wrong. But, dear Sisters, believe me, humble souls do not think these things, but believe themselves much more guilty than they are thought to be by others. My dear Sisters, if we only knew what we lose in not making merit out of these occasions of suffering we should be very careful not to allow one to pass. We must not deceive ourselves. If we do not make more profit by the opportunities of humiliation and suffering, we shall

lose many graces from Our Lord's Sacred Heart, who wishes that we should look on those who make us suffer as our benefactors and best friends. I hope you will be grieved at having displeased Our Lord in thwarting His designs for our sanctification."

Margaret Mary imposed on the novices a severe penance and then added: "But in Our Lord's Name, let us not have so much self-love nor so many excuses. Let us keep silence carefully, above all when we are annoyed. Be charitable and humble in your thoughts and words, and if you are faithful in all this I think that Our Lord will shower down more liberally than before on you graces from His Sacred Heart, and will love you tenderly.

"But if you fail, I will ask Him myself to punish you, and you will no longer have any place in my heart, which can only love you inasmuch as it knows that you are loved by the Sacred Heart, in which I hope to love you eternally, as most dear children. If I did not love you as much as I do, I should not feel so grieved at your faults which wound this divine Heart, for desiring your perfection so earnestly, there is nothing I would not suffer, except sin, to cause you to advance in the love of God. For God, all for God, my good children, carry the cross joyfully and bravely, for otherwise you will have a severe account to render at your death."

CHAPTER VIII

IGNORE WORLDLY TALK

WARNING Philothea against the vain judgments of men St. Francis de Sales says: "It is impossible to content them. Our Lord said, 'John came neither eating nor drinking and you said he was possessed by the devil. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say He is a Samaritan.' The world always thinks evil of us; if it cannot condemn the action it condemns the intention. If the sheep have horns or not, if they are white or black, the wolf will surely devour them if he can. Let us ignore this poor blind thing, Philothea, let it cry as much as it will like a scarecrow, to frighten the birds, we must be firm in carrying out our good works and our resolutions" (*Introduction to a Devout Life*).

This was also Margaret Mary's teaching: "I do not trouble myself about the opinion people may have of me, good or evil, for we are what we are before God and nothing more, in whose Presence your weak, good-for-nothing Sister does not forget you."

SECTION II.—ON TEMPTATION

TEMPTATION is a painful trial in the life of a Christian. How many souls have groaned under the stress of the passions, revolting pictures of the imagination, sudden fits of anger or inclinations to despair! It seems sometimes as if the devil had become the master in our soul; he fills it full of fear and worry and of inexplicable torture. The saints no doubt had very special graces, but they had also great temptations. "Philothea, those great and strong temptations are never permitted by God, except for the souls He intends to raise to His pure love" (*Introduction to a Devout Life*).

Souls devoted to the Sacred Heart cannot expect to be exempted from the hard necessity of being tempted. Because of their desire of being like their Beloved they may perhaps have more terrible combats, but the Sacred Heart will be with them and ensure their victory.

How St. Margaret Mary was Tempted

Our Lord went for forty days into the desert, and afterwards He allowed the devil to tempt Him. The first temptation was one of gluttony. "Command that these stones be made bread." The next temptation was to presumption. After placing Him on the pinnacle of the Temple he said: "If Thou be the Son of God cast thyself down, for it is written, that He hath given His angels charge over Thee." He then tempted Him to ambition; showing Him all the kingdoms of the world, he said: "All these will I give Thee if falling down Thou wilt adore me."

What humiliating proposals for the Son of God! Our Lord wished to lead His spouse into the desert and allow her also to bear humiliating and painful temptations.

"Our Lord gave me to understand that He wished to withdraw me into solitude, not that of the desert, but that of His Sacred Heart, where He would honour me with His familiar conversation, as a friend with his beloved, and that there He would give me new instructions on His will and new strength to accomplish it, fighting bravely until death, as I had yet to bear the attacks of a powerful foe. For this purpose, and to honour His fast in the desert, He asked me to fast fifty days on bread and water. But not being allowed to do this, He told me that it would be as pleasing to Him if I passed fifty days without drinking, in honour of the thirst he suffered for the salvation of sinners on the cross.

"This penance was allowed, which seemed to me greater than the first because of the great thirst from which I suffered, which made me often require great cups of water to refresh me. During this time I had to bear great assaults from the devil, who attacked me principally with temptations to despair, representing to me that a wicked creature such as I was could not aspire to enter Heaven, and that as I had no love for God I should be deprived of Him for all eternity. This thought made me weep bitterly. At other times he placed before me temptations to vainglory and then the abominable temptations to gluttony, causing me to feel great hunger and then bringing before my mind all that could please the taste, and this generally occurred during my times of prayer, which tormented me terribly. This hunger lasted until it was time to go to the refectory, when it was changed into so great a disgust for the food that I had to make great efforts to take even a small amount of nourishment. As soon as I had left the refectory I felt hungry again. I told my Superior all, because I am always afraid of delusions, and she told me to go to her for permission to eat when I felt very hungry, which I did, though feeling much ashamed. Instead of sending

me to get something to eat, she gave me a great humiliation on the subject, telling me to keep my hunger and satisfy it in the refectory with our Sisters. Then I remained in peace with my suffering. At that time I was not allowed to finish my fifty days without drinking, but when I had obeyed in this I was allowed to recommence, and I passed the fifty days and afterwards all Fridays without drinking.

"I am always quite happy, whether I am allowed or refused what I ask; as long as I obey, that is enough. My persecutor never ceased his attacks on all points except on the virtue of purity, which my divine Master would not allow, though once he made me suffer terrible anguish. It was on this occasion my Superior said to me: 'Go and take the place of our king, before the Blessed Sacrament.' I went, and at once found my soul so full of the most abominable temptations of impurity that I thought myself already in hell. I bore this for some hours, and the trial only ceased when my Superior discharged me from this obedience and told me to go before the Blessed Sacrament, no longer as our king, but as a religious of the Visitation. At once my temptations ceased."

In other places St. Margaret Mary speaks of some no less terrible assaults of the enemy of souls. He appeared visibly to her, and even spoke to her. "Our Lord warned me that Satan had asked to be allowed to try me in the fire of humiliations and contradictions, as gold is tried in the furnace, and that He had permitted all, except temptations to impurity. He would not allow me to have any trouble on that point, because He hated it so much, but in all other temptations I was to be on my guard, especially against sins of pride, despair, and gluttony, the last of which I had in great horror. Our Lord assured me I had nothing to fear as He would be within me as an impregnable fortress, that He would combat for me, and receive the reward of my victories. He told me that He would surround me with His power

so that I might not fail, but I was to guard faithfully my exterior conduct, and He would care for the interior. It was not long before I heard the threats of my persecutor. He appeared before me as a frightful Moor with eyes sparkling like two coals, and gnashing his teeth at me, he said: 'Cursed that thou art, I will entrap thee yet, and once in my power I will make thee feel what I can do; I will utterly destroy thee.' And though he threatened many other things, I feared him not at all, being so much strengthened interiorly. It seemed I should not have feared all the fury of hell, I felt so strong, thanks to a small crucifix to which my Lord had given the power to drive away the attacks from the devil. I carried it always on my heart, night and day, and from it obtained great help.

"I was made infirmarian. God only knows how much I had to suffer from my own nature, from others, and from the devil who often made me fall and break what I was carrying, and then laughed at me, saying: 'Oh, thou clumsy one, thou wilt never be good for anything!' which made me feel sad and downhearted. He often took from me the power of telling my Superior, for he knew obedience destroyed all his wiles. He once pushed me from the top of the stairs though I was carrying a pan of hot coals. It was not upset, and when I found myself at the bottom of the stairs I was without any hurt, although those who saw me fall felt sure I should have broken my legs, but I knew my faithful Guardian protected me."

If Our Lord willed to submit to temptation Himself and also that the Messenger of His Sacred Heart should be so cruelly tormented, are we to be astonished at finding ourselves under the same law?

Temptation, like sorrow and death, is one of the penal laws of human nature. Piety does not exempt us from it any more than it exempts us from sorrow and death.

CHAPTER IX

THE TREATMENT OF TEMPTATION

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES recommends Philothea when tempted to throw herself at the Feet of Jesus Crucified. Margaret Mary wishes us to enter the Sacred Heart. "Turn your heart simply towards the wound in Our Lord's Side, and with an act of love, kiss His sacred feet. It is the best means of overcoming the enemy in little as in great temptations, for the love of God comprises in itself the perfection of all virtues and is the sovereign remedy against all vice. Your mind becoming accustomed in all temptations to have recourse to this refuge, you will not stop to look and consider what the temptation is, but, feeling troubled, you will seize the means of overcoming it. This means is so hateful to the devil that when he sees his temptations only make you fly to the love of God, he will cease tormenting you" (*Introduction to a Devout Life*).

If, instead of going to the feet of Jesus Crucified we enter His Heart, renewing our resolution of belonging entirely to Him, how advantageous will temptation be to us and how humiliated will our enemy be by his failure! "When you are tempted unite your heart to the adorable Heart of Jesus; if you are alone kiss your crucifix; if not, press it to your heart, saying: 'I protest, O my Saviour, that with all my heart I detest and renounce all that passes in me contrary to Thy holy love, and that I would willingly die a thousand times rather than consent to it. Do not permit it, O my God; rather do Thou annihilate me. Be Thou my strength, fight for me, for I do not refuse the combat, provided Thou art with me, so that I may not offend thee, for I am and always wish to be Thine without reserve.'"

CHAPTER X

TEMPTATIONS SMALL AND GREAT

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES distinguishes small and great temptations; both can be overcome by making an act of love.

The holy doctor, however, gives us particular advice for different trials. He says: " For small temptations such as those to vanity, suspicions, vexation, jealousy, etc., which like flies pass before our eyes, sometimes alighting on our face, etc., the best resistance is to take no notice " (*Introduction to a Devout Life*).

Margaret Mary wishes us also to have the same liberty of spirit. " For all thoughts of vanity, etc., it is best to ignore them and simply to say to Satan when he suggests any: ' Cursed Spirit, I renounce thee and thy suggestions; I did not begin this action for thee, and I will not leave it for thee.' "

In great temptations, above all in those which last some time, the servant of God gives wise advice: " Against these thoughts and dreams which trouble your imagination make use of the psalm *Dominus illuminatio mea*, and at night say the psalm *Exurgat Deus*, then make three signs of the cross over your heart with holy water, saying: *Per signum crucis*, as you lie down. On rising, make the sign of the cross on your five senses, saying *Sanctus Deus immortalis*, etc., to ask the assistance of the Blessed Trinity to resist temptation courageously. Rest assured that as long as your will does not consent to these thoughts God is not offended. Do not reflect on them, but simply turn from them with contempt."

CHAPTER XI

PATIENCE IN TEMPTATION

SOMETIMES temptations last entire days, but more often they recur at intervals. A soul subject to severe attacks is liable to discouragement. St. Margaret Mary recommends patience. "I pray Our Lord Jesus Christ that as it is not His will that the storm in your heart should cease, that He would be Himself your support, so that you may be firm and constant in His service. You must not fear the temptation, for it will not conquer you as long as you keep yourself attached to Our Lord by a loving confidence and by the strength of your will, though perhaps without any consolation, letting your enemy cry out at you and endeavour to trouble you as much as he is permitted. It is a good sign when he makes so much noise; he has not obtained what he sought. At the same time, be faithful in not consenting to his suggestions, rejecting them simply. The Sacred Heart knows well what is passing in your heart, and allows your soul to feel this pain. Keep yourself in peace and submit yourself to all His designs for your soul. Hope in His Goodness, and let your confidence increase as your pains multiply. Be faithful in the practice of virtue, and do not wilfully neglect any opportunity. Look on yourself as a tree planted by running waters, bearing its fruits in season, and the more it is shaken by the wind the deeper its roots grow. In the same way the more you are shaken by the winds of temptation the more deeply you must strike your roots of profound humility in the Sacred Heart of Our Lord, whom I supplicate to surround us with His Power as an impregnable fortress, saying: 'Sacred Heart of Jesus, confound all our enemies.'"

CHAPTER XII

VIGILANCE AND CONFIDENCE

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES says: "Make acts of abjection and humility as often as you can, even if it seems to you unwillingly; in this way you will accustom yourself to being humble and you will weaken your vanity, so that when temptation comes your inclinations will be against it, and you will have more strength to fight" (*Introduction to a Devout Life*).

In the same way Margaret Mary recommends us to practise virtues when our soul is in peace, so that we may overcome in the strife. "I warn you to be much on your guard, so that Satan may have no power to make you offend God, who will strengthen you against his wiles if you are faithful. And for this end you must be meek and charitable with your neighbour, bear towards God a humble love, and towards yourself a peaceful and courageous affection, which never allows you to be discouraged by difficulties which you will always have. But take courage, dear Sister, the Sacred Heart is the reward. But do not make too sure, for I think Our Lord means to try you as gold is tried in the fire so that He may place you amongst His faithful servants. Therefore, you must accept lovingly every occasion of suffering as a precious token of His love. To suffer in silence, without complaining of anything, that is what He asks of you."

"Be strong and constant in His holy love, for which you must strive to forget yourself. Leave yourself to be guided entirely by divine Providence. Although these rules seem hard to nature, try and accept them willingly, remembering that we only become holy in humbling ourselves, renouncing and mortifying our

passions—in one word, by being crucified in everything and everywhere.

" Keep yourself close to Our Lord and let Him do His will. He will not allow you to perish. He loves your soul and wishes it to be saved. Be comforted and fight valiantly, for I am sure the Good Shepherd will not allow it to be devoured by the infernal wolf with whom He wishes us to fight that He may have victories for which to reward us. We must never be discouraged nor give way to uneasiness, for if we are humbly faithful our trials will exalt us before God in proportion as they humble us in our own estimation. I hope this from Our Lord's goodness. When attacked by temptation use the psalm *Dominus illuminatio mea, quem timebo!* Our holy Mother used it on such occasions.

" Neither the sight nor the words of the father of lies ought to frighten us; he can do nothing but what God permits; place your confidence in the goodness and charity of Our Lord. Do not trouble at whatever may befall you. It is the glory of a faithful soldier and the sign of his fidelity to be specially hated by the enemy of his prince."

CHAPTER XIII

SPIRITUAL ARIDITY

IF temptation frightens pious souls, dryness and aridity often disturb them. "Sometimes you will seem so destitute of all feelings of devotion that your soul will seem like a desert and barren land, where you can see no path on which to go to God, and where no salutary waters of grace flow. Alas! how worthy of compassion is a soul in this state, especially if it is severe; for then, as David says, it is fed night and day with tears, while its enemy mocks it and, to cause it to fall into despair, says: 'Ah! wretch, now where is thy God? How shalt thou find Him? Who can restore to thee His grace?'" (*Introduction to a Devout Life*).

St. Margaret Mary gives us for our consolation the same advice as that of her holy Founder.

"Never lose courage, and do not be troubled. Keep your soul in peace amidst the changes of this life, and it will become the throne of God. Do not grieve at the dryness with which you serve Him; your love is so much purer and your service so much the more pleasing if you continue faithful, acting by faith alone."

Had Margaret Mary experienced this aridity in God's service? Had she been so tried by her divine Master? She tells us: "Once, after having suffered a long time under the weight of God's holiness, I lost my voice and my strength. I felt so ashamed before others that death would have been preferable to me. Holy Communion was a great trial and I could not explain the pain I felt in receiving it, although I was not allowed to abstain, for Our Lord Himself inflicted this trial, forbidding me to keep away from Him. I could truly say, with the Prophet, that tears were my food night and

day. Jesus, in the Blessed Sacrament, who was my only refuge, treated me with such severity that I suffered a kind of agony and I could not remain before It without doing violence to myself, and if out of the time of obligation I presented myself before Him, saying, 'Where wilt Thou, O divine Jesus, that I go, since Thou art everywhere?' I entered and left His Presence without finding any consolation except that of sorrow."

She sought for help and consolation herself, as Our Lord had taught her, from Peter, James, and John.

"Your poor weak child wishes to write you a few lines to say how tenderly she loves you. She is full of pain and suffering, and without help or remedy except from the divine Heart. I am unworthy of our dear Lord's favours through my ingratitude and unfaithfulness, although He is still as mercifully generous towards me as before, and this increases my sorrow. I do not know if it is the devil who suggests the thought which torments me that God does not give such great graces to those who are wicked and hypocrites as I am, and that these graces are only meant to cause me to lose my soul. Amidst all this trouble I see my life before me as an abominable picture, and though I can see nothing distinctly bad, I could scarcely bear the sight without dying of sorrow if I did not feel myself surrounded and sustained by an invisible power, which dissipates the fury of hell seeking to rob me of my peace of heart. At other times I think I only possess a false peace, which comes from hardness of heart, making me insensible to my own misery. But, my good Mother, is it possible that the loving Heart could deprive His unworthy slave of the joy of loving Him eternally? I beg of you to tell me what you think, for my consolation; I will accept your decision. I beg you will not praise me, for indeed I seem to draw others to perdition with me; they lean too much on what I say. The fear of being misled troubles me much, but I abandon myself to all unreservedly."

CHAPTER XIV

DRYNESS OFTEN ADVANTAGEOUS

"IT is a great mistake made by many, and principally by women, that our service of God continued without consolation or sensible feeling is less pleasing to His divine Majesty. Roses when fresh seem more beautiful, but they have more scent and strength when they are dry; in the same way, though great tenderness of heart causes our duties to be more pleasant to ourselves, because we only judge of the happiness we feel in doing them, they have nevertheless a more delicious scent for Heaven and a greater value before God when they are performed in spiritual desolation" (*Introduction to a Devout Life*).

The Virgin of the Visitation perfectly understood her holy Founder's teaching. She gave an admirable commentary in the following lines:

"You ought to abandon all to the power and care of Our Lord's Sacred Heart, for which you ought to be full of love and gratitude, as He has shown so much mercy and goodness to you, which I have understood better since reading your letter. In all that you look upon as the severity of His Justice I only see tokens of His loving-kindness towards you. By these things, so disagreeable to nature, He wishes to withdraw your affections from yourself and all created things, making you entirely dependent on His grace, expecting all from Him, though not neglecting anything you ought to do yourself.

"Oh, dearest Sister, if you could understand the ardent love of our divine Lord for you, you would see that all He allows and sends to you is in love. For this dryness, which you complain of, is only to teach you that to feel His love and His grace you must be unfeeling for all

created things, and above all for anything that your self-love or self-will may suggest. He wishes you to make Him the sacrifice of this last as often as He furnishes occasions, denying and breaking it in, until it is entirely destroyed, so that this divine Heart may reign in you. In this lies peace, which you cannot enjoy until this work be done in as far as it depends on you. All this dryness and desolation of spirit are only intended to teach you that if you wish to be a flourishing plant in the garden of the Sacred Heart and bear fruits unto salvation, you must first be stripped and destitute of all love and inordinate inclination for others and for yourself. You must die to all the suggestions of your self-love, either in excusing yourself or in any other way. You must be deaf to all that.

" Also this darkness in your mind is intended to extinguish in you the false lights of human reasoning, which prevent God's designs for you being carried out, and also withdraw you from the path of perfection. Allow yourself to be guided entirely by His holy will, living in His Presence and being brave in mortifying and humbling yourself whenever an opportunity offers.

" The silence of Our Lord in your soul, which prevents your having any good thoughts, is to teach you that unless you extinguish in your soul all that does not speak to you of your Beloved, for instance, the reflections of your self-love, etc., you will not be able to hear His voice, who will nevertheless teach you more by His loving silence than all creatures could do by their eloquence. Therefore, keep silence in your soul, speaking little to others, but much to God by your works and sufferings, and acting always for love of Him.

" Be stripped of all, and the Sacred Heart will clothe you. Empty your heart of all, and He will fill you. Forget yourself and give yourself entirely to Him, He

will think and have care of you. Accept lovingly all that humbles and annihilates you the most, for this will bring about the triumph of the divine Heart and cause your heart to reign in His. Live without care, as a child who only has the desire to live, and submit to His will. Keep your soul in peace, without trouble or uneasiness at the sight of your defects and miseries. These are good to keep before us the love of our abjection which we ought never to lose. And for that reason, if we did not offend God we should be very glad to see how often we fail.

"Avoid haste and try to train yourself interiorly and exteriorly according to the meek and loving Heart of Our Lord, doing each action with the same tranquillity as though you had nothing else to do, and with the same purity of love as though it were the last action of your life, using each moment as your Rule demands.

"Retrench all curiosity in what regards others."

Margaret Mary practised what she taught. "The sufferings of the soul, received with love, are like a purifying fire which little by little consumes all that displeases our divine Spouse in our souls. I am sure those who have been tried will acknowledge this, and also that they advanced much in the way of perfection without noticing it at that time; so much so that if the choice were placed before us, a faithful soul would not hesitate, but would generously accept this beloved cross, even if it conferred no other benefit on us than that of making us like our crucified Lord. Even if we loved Him only a little, we should suffer more in seeing ourselves in joy and consolation while He was weighed down with opprobrium and suffering, than if we saw ourselves in some degree like Him; but if this is not so, then let us acknowledge that we do not love Him, but rather that we only love ourselves. Real love cannot bear any dissimilarity between the loved ones and cannot rest until

they are in some degree alike, otherwise there would be no union, which can only be attained by conformity.

"Our Lord made me understand that I was to strive to become the living image of His crucified love, and for this end that I was to labour at the destruction of all that savours of the old Adam, so that He might imprint Himself on me, which would make me live an entirely crucified life detached from all terrestrial and human satisfactions, and that when this image was conformable to Himself He would attach it to the cross.

"As soon as my divine Master had given me this lesson I remained with Him until He should give me another, and it was not in my power in any of my exercises to do otherwise than offer myself to Our Lord as His suffering likeness, so that He might finish what He had begun, making to Him a continual sacrifice of my whole being to be destroyed, annihilated, and treated as He willed."

CHAPTER XV

THE CAUSE OF ARIDITY

"WHAT will you do, Philothea, when desolation comes? Try to find out the cause. We often bring aridity and desolation on ourselves" (St. Francis de Sales).

1. God sends them because our love alone is not strong enough to unite us to Him.

"My dearest Sister, I must tell you quite simply what I think of your difficulties, and it is that the fear Our Lord has allowed to fill your soul is a mark of His love; for seeing that your love for Him was not strong enough to make you avoid evil and do good, He mixes fear with it so that the two together may enable you to do what He asks. Have, therefore, always a loving fear which will make you avoid evil and do good and reject all other fear, for it only comes from the spirit of darkness; then try to make love so increase in your heart that it may chase away this fear, saying before each of your actions: 'My God, I do this for Thy love, renouncing all other intention.' As often as you feel troubled by this fear renew your vows."

2. God sends desolation and aridity to punish us for our love for creatures.

"That which weakens love in your heart is your attachment to creatures and your self-seeking. If you wish pure love to reign in your heart you must die to all this; above all, you must give up your own will, for self-will much displeases the Sacred Heart of Our Lord, who allows you to feel no consolation in your prayers or in the practice of virtue because you are too much attached to creatures. He also gives you greater occasions of merit, but you must be constantly faithful.

Whatever it costs, you must persevere, for the Sacred Heart is the enemy of inconstancy, and that is your most serious defect. Only you can conquer this, with God's grace, by doing continual violence to yourself. This you must resolve upon.

"You will never find true peace until you are stripped of all. Strive, then, fervently, to do this, for there is no sanctity for you without it. Forgetfulness of self and love of your own abjection will lead you quickly to this detachment."

3. God sends aridity and desolation so that we may abandon ourselves entirely to be guided by His love.

"You are afflicted because of your interior troubles, and I tell you you should draw from them your greatest comfort, provided you bear them with peace and submission to the will of Our Lord, who only sends them as marks of His love which He wishes you to recognize, so that you may be grateful. He means first to purify you by these troubles from the affection you have for creatures, contrary to the purity of His holy love. Secondly, He wants you to deserve the crown He has prepared for you by giving you a small share in the suffering He bore during the whole of His mortal life, and whatever your pains may be you are blessed in having this conformity with Him.

"Generally speaking, great spiritual consolations only produce in us self-complacency and satisfaction, and never pure and solid love. See now, if you ought not to be grateful to Our Lord for treating you in this manner. He only asks perfect submission to His holy will and that you should act with great purity of intention to please Him and without human respect. As I have already told you, He asks no other proof of your love than a profound humility, peace in your heart and soul, and the desire to love Him more, for He truly loves you and will not allow you to perish. Have, therefore, no

reserve with Him who wishes to be in you the seed of eternal life. He wishes to reign, govern, and give life to all your works and be the sole object of your love."

4. We must, therefore, accept desolation and aridity with resignation while doing our best to destroy anything of our own fault which causes it.

"Believe me, and do not allow yourself to be discouraged nor give way to sadness in the little trials with which Our Lord is pleased to try your love and patience, but unite your will with His and allow Him to do with you what He desires. He wishes you to remain in peace in your desolation without uneasily seeking for means to be delivered from it, because it would be useless. And since God wills it, why should you torment yourself about it? Only remove all that might be an obstacle to His love. He wishes for you to be stripped of all that could please self only and attach you to creatures, for in proportion as you clothe yourself with these things He strips you of His graces. To be applauded and esteemed is very dangerous for you. Do nothing to obtain this. Fly from flattering tongues and human sympathy which you might foolishly prefer to the love of Our Lord, whose holy intention is to keep you little and lowly by the trials He allows to come to you, for humiliations are necessary not only for your sanctification, but also for your salvation. Every other way is dangerous for you, and you ought to welcome every opportunity of humbling yourself, whether from yourself or from others."

5. Whatever the cause, or whatever the duration of our spiritual desolation we must accept it in union with the Sacred Heart.

"Our Lord wishes you to proceed on your journey thinking you are in His company, above all, when you pray; you must rest at His feet amidst His enemies who strike, insult, and accuse Him unjustly, without

any defending Him, and without one word from Him asking for help or making any complaint. You must try to imitate Him, seeing yourself surrounded by your enemies who make use of temptations to afflict you and strike you, and also by others who cry out that you must be crucified. Well, consent willingly. And when you are accused interiorly and told you deserve eternal death, do not excuse yourself but submit, saying to Our Lord that you hope in His mercy that He will not deny you eternal life. And in memory of His blindfolding accept your interior darkness. And as He is destitute of all consolation and steeped in bitterness, so you must also suffer your pains destitute of all support, calm and peaceful amid the storms and tempests raging around you, until you are stripped of all, like Our Lord; then you will be clothed with the robe of innocence which you will find in your pains, if you bear them detached from all things, for Our Lord wishes to possess our hearts stripped of all."

CHAPTER XVI

WEARINESS

A TRIAL of a peculiar kind in the service of God is that kind of weariness which comes either from past carelessness or from weak health. St. Margaret Mary, experienced in spiritual things, indicates the remedy.

"In reply to your question I do not think you will do anything opposed to the spirit of submission and sacrifice in which you must live and die, if you represent to those over you the weak state of your health. Once you have done this remain in peace, and leave all to Our Lord who (I dare to say it) will never abandon you, but will take a particular care of you in proportion as you confide in Him. Be faithful in loving Him and forgetting self. The love of contempt suffers all in silence.

"On what you say of the pain you feel in leading a life of weariness in the service of God, I tell you not to trouble about it, but all you have to do is to unite yourself in all your work to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord, at the beginning submitting to His will and at the end to His good pleasure. For instance, you feel you cannot meditate. Then be satisfied in offering Our Lord's prayer in the Blessed Sacrament, offering His fervour to repair your tepidity, and in each of your actions, say: 'My Lord, I wish to do or to suffer this in the Sacred Heart of Jesus Thy divine Son, and according to His intentions, which I offer in reparation for all that is imperfect in mine.' And when some pain or humiliation is sent you say to yourself: 'Take what the Sacred Heart sends you

in order to unite yourself to Him.' Try to keep a peaceful heart, which is worth all imaginable treasures, and the means of doing this is to have no will of your own but to place that of Our Lord in its stead. In one word, this loving Heart will supply for all you need, for It will love God for you and you will love God in It and by It. But do I not say too much? It is only to satisfy your humility, for does not our holy Founder say that our perfection consists in thinking little and speaking little, but in doing and suffering much. Alas! dear Sister, in writing this I condemn myself, finding myself so far from what I teach. Therefore, I will write no more until I shall have learnt to practise what I preach. For, as Our Lord says: 'What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?' You see how plainly I speak to you who are so dear to my heart. You may rest assured of my love, and if I can in any way be useful to you, only let me know, and for the love of the Sacred Heart you will find me ready. Our Lord will, I am sure, be pleased with the prayers you propose offering to His beloved disciple St. John, but let them be offered to obtain for your soul perfect submission to His Holy will. You ask me why I allowed three weeks to pass without answering your letter. I can only say that though I tried very hard to find time to write I was not able to do so on account of my charge (Assistant to the Community). But I certainly did not make myself conspicuous by making a longer retreat than the other Sisters, who had ten days. You ask what I did during this time of silence. Alas! I have only one thing to do, which is to love God and to forget and annihilate myself, for all consists in loving God and hating ourselves. And this seems to me of so great importance that I could never find enough time to give to it. Let us, therefore, love Him, the only Spouse of our souls,

love Him in everything and above everything without any feeling of love or consolation, in suffering and in desolation, as in joy and sweetness. And do not say you have no love, for I say you have, but you have too much fear, which displeases Him, for He asks from you a loving confidence."

NOTES

I

INVITATION TO PERSEVERE TO THE END IN DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART

"RENEW every first Friday of the month your consecration to the Sacred Heart and every moment protest your wish to be faithful to It, saying with David: 'I will never forget Thy justifications, my God, for by them I was renewed.' And when you feel some diminution of fervour, again with your whole heart renew your consecration, and you will feel strengthened. I conjure you by all you hold sacred in Heaven and on earth, by the Baptism you have received, by the breasts at which Our Lord was nourished, by the loving Heart with which He loved us and by His mercy in which you hope, to continue and persevere in devotion to the Sacred Heart of our Saviour."

Choose It for your inheritance. What a treasure! Margaret Mary explains to us Its riches.

"You will have for your inheritance the Sacred Heart of Jesus, where you will receive a childlike love for God and a paternal love for your neighbour and the dispositions of a judge for yourself.

"Your inheritance will be the wound in Our Lord's right hand from which you can take all you need to satisfy for your want of charity and purity of intention.

"Your inheritance will be the garden of Olives with Jesus sorrowful even unto death, which treasure will pay for all your vain joys. His prayer will make reparation for the time you have lost during your prayer and obtain for you the gift of prayer and union with God. Your inheritance will be Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament,

where you will find a hidden manna which will disgust you with all earthly things, to which you will prefer a life hidden and sacrificed to Our Lord. That is not all: if your love for the Sacred Heart is disinterested, ardent, and heroic, you will deserve His choice graces.

" The most silent will be the best instructed.

" The most mortified will be the most tenderly caressed.

" The most charitable will be the most loved.

" The most submissive will have the most power and credit in that divine Heart.

" The most detached from all earthly things will possess It the most perfectly."

II

ACT OF CONSECRATION

O Lord Jesus, the only Love of our hearts, where two or three are gathered together in Thy Name Thou hast promised to be in the midst of them. Behold us, Lord, our hearts united in one desire to adore, praise, love, and give glory to Thy Heart for ever blessed, to which we dedicate and consecrate ours for time and for eternity. We renounce for ever all love or affection which is not in accordance with Thy adorable Heart, desiring that all the aspirations of ours may be always conformable to Thine, which we wish to please as far as possible to us. As we can do nothing good of ourselves, we supplicate Thee, O loving Heart of Jesus, by the infinite goodness and sweetness of Thy divine Heart to strengthen and confirm ours in Thy holy love and service, so that nothing may ever separate us from Thee, but that sacrificing all that might hinder us, we may always be faithful to Thee, confessing that out of Thee all is vanity and affliction of spirit. Heart of our loving Lord and Saviour, mayest Thou be blessed, loved, and glorified eternally.

III

ST. MARGARET MARY'S MESSAGE

THE Canonization of St. Margaret Mary ought to spur us on to increased love and devotion to the Sacred Heart, whose messenger she was. Her message may be comprised in two words, love and confidence, or perhaps better in one only—LOVE. When our divine Lord was on earth He seemed to exact faith from all who went to Him for favours, but if we may reverently say so, He seemed more touched where He found love. The Apostles and holy women had apparently lost faith after the Passion, but they still loved Him ardently, so at His Resurrection He appeared to them with His customary goodness, and with scarcely a reproach for their desertion and cowardice. To St. Peter was promised the Primacy because of his faith: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God;" but it was his threefold act of love by the sea-shore that gave him the charge of feeding the sheep and lambs of his Master.

So we, too, must grow in love, remembering, as we are told by holy writers, that our reward in Heaven will not depend so much on what we have done as on the love with which we have done it, so that a very lowly, humble life may gain a great reward. But we cannot love, we say. How are we to learn to love?

In the first place, by willing and desiring to love our Master. He takes our will and desires for love, and let us remember that this kind of love may be very pleasing to Our Lord and less dangerous for us, as affording no room for self-conceit.

Second, by praying for this love. He tells us Himself that He came to cast fire on the earth; let us beg Him to

cast that fire into our hearts; He will not refuse. He loves us too much and desires our love.

Third, by meditating often on Our Lord's words, actions, and character as described by the Evangelists. Let us learn how humble, sweet, patient, and unselfish was His divine Heart, so that by degrees ours may become like It.

IV

THE ENTHRONEMENT OF THE SACRED HEART

The devotion, so intimately connected with the Sacred Heart, of Its Enthronement in families, has been so specially blessed by the Holy See, that we give here a short account of its origin and also of the ceremonial generally used, for the convenience of readers.

The enthronement of the Sacred Heart may be said to date back to the lifetime of St. Margaret Mary, when she and her novices first hung up and honoured a picture of that divine Heart. In our own times, however, a holy priest, the Rev. Matthew Crawley-Boevey of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Picpus, seems to have been raised up to propagate it. When in Rome he laid his desires and plans before our holy Father, Pius X., who granted a special blessing to the work in March, 1911. Since then our holy Father, Benedict XV., has granted a brief encouraging and blessing the work, and Cardinal Billot, S.J., has written a letter in which he warmly extols the devotion and says to the Rev. Father Crawley: "This is a magnificent work. You must devote your life to it." With the permission of his Superiors the Father has travelled all over the world establishing the devotion, and at present (1915) three million families have enthroned the Sacred Heart on their hearths.

In the promises made by Our Lord to St. Margaret Mary we read: "I will bless the houses wherein the image of my Sacred Heart shall be exposed and honoured;" surely to obtain such a privilege everyone would wish to have such an image. The Jews of old cried out:

"We have no King but Cæsar," and "We will not that this man should reign over us," but we, in placing the Sacred Heart in our homes, elect Him as our King, and desire above all things that He should reign over us.

It is well that the first act of Consecration, or the enthronement proper, should be made by a priest, but this is not necessary. The father or mother of the family, surrounded by all the rest, may very well do it. The Consecration ought to be renewed on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, on the birthdays of father, mother, or any of the children, at a birth, marriage, or death in the family.

May the Sacred Heart so bless us that our lives may be worthy of the King under whose rule we have placed ourselves.

Ceremonial of Enthronement.

Act of Consecration read by the priest or, in his absence, by the father or mother:

O Sacred Heart of Jesus who didst reveal to St. Margaret Mary Thy desire to reign over Christian families, we have met here to-day to proclaim Thy complete Kingship over our home. Henceforth, we desire to shape our lives in accordance with Thine, to cultivate beneath our roof those virtues to which Thou hast promised peace, even here below, and to shun that worldly spirit which Thou hast reproved.

Reign over our minds in the simplicity of our faith. Hold sway over our hearts in the boundless love for Thee with which they shall burn, a love whose flames we shall feed by the frequent reception of Thy Holy Eucharist.

Vouchsafe, O divine Heart, to preside at our meetings, to bless our spiritual and temporal enterprises, to banish our cares and to temper our sorrows. Should one or other of us at any time offend Thee, call him back to Thee, O Heart of Jesus, of Thy great goodness and mercy

towards the penitent sinner. And when the hour of parting comes, or when death shall bring bereavement to our home, we shall all, both those that go and those that remain, be resigned to Thine eternal decrees. One thought will uphold us—that a day will come when our family, reunited in Heaven, shall sing for ever Thy glories and Thy bounties.

Vouchsafe, O Immaculate Heart of Mary and thou, O glorious patriarch St. Joseph, to present to the Sacred Heart this our consecration and to make us mindful of it day by day.

Hail, Heart of Jesus, our King, our Father.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us (*three times*).

Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

St. Joseph, pray for us.

St. Margaret Mary, pray for us.

Indulgences.

1. Seven years and seven quarantines to all members of the family who, with a contrite heart, assist at the ceremony of the enthronement.

2. A plenary indulgence to the same if, having confessed and communicated, on that day they visit a church or public oratory, and there pray for the intentions of the Holy Father.

3. An indulgence of 300 days if on the anniversary of the enthronement they renew the consecration before the picture of the Sacred Heart.

Benedict XV.

BOOK II

BLESSED JOHN EUDES

CHAPTER I

THE LIFE AND MISSION OF BLESSED JOHN EUDES.—PREPARATION FOR HIS MISSION AS APOSTLE OF THE SACRED HEART

IT is easy to draw up a short biography of the apostles of the Sacred Heart with their writings and to prove their mission from their own words. To write the life of Bl. John Eudes, and to establish the certainty of his mission, another method must be followed. At the end of his life he certainly wrote a memorial in which he enumerated the graces God had showered upon him during his long life. Unhappily he simply spoke of facts, entering into no details. However, this memorial, such as it is, contains precious memories and, above all, the expression of the gratitude of the holy apostle for the infinite mercy of God.

He says: "God granted me the grace of being born of parents in a medium condition of life, but who lived in His fear. My father and mother had been married three years without having any children; they therefore took a vow, in honour of our Blessed Lady, to make a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Recouvrance, a chapel in the parish of Tourailles and the diocese of Séez. After which my mother, expecting a child, made, with my father, the promised pilgrimage. There they offered and gave me to Our Lord and His Blessed Mother. I am all Thine, Jesus. I am all Thine, Mary. Receive me and fill me so entirely that I may be entirely occupied and consumed with Jesus and Mary and all the Saints to praise and glorify eternally the most Holy Trinity. Amen.

"I was born on the 14th of November, 1601 (which fell that year on a Wednesday), in the parish of Ri, near

to Argentan. I was baptized the following Friday evening, the beginning of Saturday, and the name of John was given to me.

"At about the age of twelve years I began to know God by a special grace, and after a general confession I communicated every month. I made my first Communion on the Feast of Pentecost; *Gratias Deo super inenarrabili dono ejus.*

"Later on, God gave me the grace to consecrate myself entirely to Him by a vow of chastity. May He be for ever blessed.

"After having studied, in the fields, under a priest named M. Jacques Blavette, whose example and instructions were of great service to me, my father sent me to Caen to continue my studies under the Jesuit Fathers at their college. There I was received into the fourth class in 1615 on the feast of St. Denis, under the Rev. F. Robin, with whom I remained until I had passed the second class, which I considered a special mark of Our Lord's love, for he was a holy and pious teacher who often spoke with great fervour of God, which helped me more than I can tell in the ways of perfection. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not His benefits.' I was received into the Congregation of Our Lady at the college about the year 1618, during which Our Lord bestowed many graces on me through the intercession of His holy Mother. *Confitebor tibi, Domine, in toto corde meo.*"

The holy old man, in this account of his youth, remembers well God's graces, and testifies to his gratitude for them, but he purposely forgets the virtues of which they were the fruit. From his earliest childhood he had shown a tender piety, loving to spend much time in prayer. When nine years of age, in a dispute with a playfellow, the latter gave John a blow on the face. The holy child instantly fell on his knees saying: "Now strike the other cheek!" His conduct at college and

his ardent piety gained him the esteem of both masters and pupils, who called him "the devout Eudes." Before his first Communion he had made a vow of chastity. During his stay at the college he renewed this vow and chose Our Lady as his Spouse. He drew up an authentic act of the mystical alliance in which already appears his love for the Queen of Virgins.

On his return home his intentions were tested in a delicate but decisive manner. Without his knowledge or consent his parents had already arranged a marriage for him with a young girl belonging to one of the most honourable families in the country. When this arrangement was made known to John, he simply replied in a vague manner, saying he had already chosen another Spouse incomparably more beautiful, rich and good.

The next day his parents purposely took him to a party assembled at the house of the parents of the young girl. John guessed the snare; he was polite, but of a studied coldness. On his return home he had to bear his father's reproaches: "What did he want? The choice made for him was a good one." John understood that it was now time to reveal God's designs for him. Respectfully, but firmly, he told his father that after long deliberation, and acting on the advice of his Superiors, he had resolved to consecrate himself to the service of God.

Shortly after, on the 19th of December, 1620, the holy young man received the tonsure and minor orders from the hands of Mgr. Le Camus, Bishop of Séez. He was then nineteen years old.

John Eudes wished to be a priest according to the Heart of God. Terrified at the irregularities witnessed at this time among the clergy, he resolved to enter the Congregation founded by Cardinal de Bérulle.

This determination, even more than his first choice, was to draw down on him the protests of his family. So when the pious Levite went to ask his father's permission

and blessing he was met with a direct refusal: "He saw well now," he said, "that he had only toiled for an ungrateful and unnatural son." His mother joined her prayers and tears to the reproaches of her husband. John feared to be unable to withstand this struggle in which his own heart took the part of his parents, so taking courage, he determined on flight, to escape these sad scenes. Leaving his parents' house he rode towards Paris. He had scarcely gone three miles when his horse refused to proceed. John saw in this the Hand of Providence and returned to his father, throwing himself at his feet and begging with tears that he would no longer oppose the carrying-out of his vocation and give him his blessing. Isaac Eudes was essentially a man of faith. Convinced at last by his son's reasons and overcome by his tears, he replied: "I will not oppose your vocation, if it is from God. He is the Master. I know well you belong far more to Him than to me. But if you remained with us to assist and console us in our old age would you belong less to God? How can you abandon us after all we have done for you?" John remained firm and his father yielded. "As you persist in your resolution, thinking it is God's will, carry it out; I oppose it no longer."

After obtaining his father's consent and blessing he again took the road to Paris, and on the 25th of March, 1623, entered the Oratory.

In conducting the holy man to this Congregation, the Sacred Heart put him in the school of the saints. Pope Urban VIII. said Father de Bérulle was not a man but an angel. The whole spirit of Cardinal de Bérulle, says Father Burgoing, is found in what he calls a union, adherence and clinging to the person of Jesus Christ in His Sacred Humanity and to His Holy Mother. Jesus Christ was his centre and his all, and in proportion the same could be said of our Blessed Lady (*Works of Cardinal de Bérulle*).

Struck with fear while celebrating the Holy Mass, at the very moment of the consecration, he called out: "Where is He, Jesus Christ, my Saviour? May I see Him, adore Him, and receive Him?"

Père de Condren was not inferior to the Cardinal in the spirit of faith or in love for Our Lord. M. Olier said of him: "It was rather Jesus Christ who lived in Père Condren than Père Condren who lived in himself." When Bl. John Eudes became Superior of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary he wished that the life of this holy man should be read every year in the refectory so that his hearers might profit by his rare doctrine and sanctity.

The fervent novice was worthy of such Masters in the school of virtue and holiness. He responded to the predilection that Cardinal de Bérulle felt for him by an ardent zeal for his own perfection and for the practice of all the virtues. Called to receive Holy Orders he was ordained priest on the 29th of December, 1625, and on the feast of Christmas celebrated his first Mass with the fervour of a seraph. One may judge of his interior feelings by these words which he loved to repeat: "To say Mass well one would need three eternities, the first in which to prepare, the second in which to celebrate, and the third in which to make a worthy thanksgiving."

A trial awaited him immediately after his ordination. "In the years 1625 and 1626 God sent me a corporal infirmity which prevented me from labouring outside. He gave me these two years to pass in retreat, giving myself to prayer, spiritual reading and other good works. This was a very special grace for me, for which I ought to bless and thank eternally the divine Goodness. *Misericordias Domini in æternum cantabo.*"

Truly a great grace! It would be difficult to say how great an influence those two years devoted to prayer and sacred study had on the future apostle of the Sacred Heart.

An unexpected disaster called the holy man from his solitude and sent him into his native country. Pestilence appeared in the neighbourhood of Argentau, and many died. Father Eudes at once asked his Superior's permission to devote himself to the service of the plague-stricken. During two months he spent himself for the sick day and night. His heroism was shared by a priest named Laurent, who says: "He and I said Mass in the chapel dedicated to St. Guron; then I placed the particles I had consecrated in a little white metal box, which I suspended from my neck. After which we went to seek the sick, first in one parish, then in another, whose confessions we heard, and then administered to them the Holy Communion. We led this life from the month of August until All Saints, when the scourge was over, and God took such care of us that we suffered nothing in consequence. I will praise Thee, my Lord and my King, for Thou art my God and my Saviour."

Immediately after the cessation of the plague Father Eudes was sent to the house of the Oratory at Caen. He prepared by study and prayer for the work of the missions. "Behold me, Lord," he often said, "send me if Thou wilt, let me work in Thy vineyard."

Before sending him Our Lord would give him another occasion of showing his zeal. The pestilence broke out in the town of Caen and made terrible ravages. The hospitals were crowded and many died without any religious assistance. Father Eudes' tender heart was deeply moved. He earnestly begged to be allowed to devote himself again to the plague-stricken. He made himself everyone's servant, but being looked upon with fear by all, a- infected, he was obliged to go and live in a meadow opposite the Abbey of St. Giles. There a large barrel was used by him as refectory, dormitory and oratory. After having taken a little rest in the night he arose each morning full of fresh courage, to continue his

painful work. These priestly heroes lived thus some weeks. Miraculously preserved from the disease, they replied to those who were surprised: "I am more evil than the disease, so it could have no hold on me."

Such labours could not, however, but wear out his strength, and fever soon brought the holy priest's life into danger. The inhabitants of Caen were much distressed, but especially was this true of the religious Communities, who, having been able to appreciate his worth, offered up fervent prayers for his restoration to health. On the contrary, the holy man hoped for his deliverance from this world. "Many thanks be given," he cried. "Behold death, so much desired, has come! *Lætatus sum in his quæ dicta sunt mihi: In domum Dei ibimus.*"

It was a false alarm. The end of Father Eudes was not to come for half a century yet. Such was the priest whom M. Olier was to call the wonder of his time, and that the Sacred Heart had chosen for Its first apostle.

CHAPTER II

FATHER EUDES' MISSION AND CHARACTER

HAD Bl. John Eudes a revelation ordering him to preach devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary? If hostile sarcasms were a proof, the extraordinary mission of the holy apostle would be amply confirmed. They are unanimous in accusing him of acting according to visions either accorded to himself or to Marie des Vallées. "If I call him a visionary," says a monk of Barbary, "it is not from malice but because I am convinced he easily believes these things, and now (1674) I am more convinced than I was (1663) by what persons of whom I am the director have told me in confidence. I am very sorry for him, and then it is sad to see so many so easily taken in with dreams and imagination. This good man, Father Eudes, causes his *béate* Marie des Vallées to say that the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary will be as solemnly kept in the Church as that of the Blessed Sacrament. Tell me, Father Eudes, where do you find signs of this? Oh, there are plenty of proofs that it is the devil who has inspired you with the institution of this feast. You were doubtless necessary to the Church and without your brilliant revelations she would be in darkness."

The Abbot of Aunay, M. Dufour, is not less virulent against the holy man. "He establishes his devotion on visions and revelations; he writes that Jesus Christ has inspired the desire for the establishment of this feast, and that He will punish those who oppose it. He says that the Virgin has said that the feast would, one day, be a second solemnity of the Blessed Sacrament."

Father de la Saudraye of the Oratory of Caen repeated

the same reproaches against Father Eudes in a letter of January 27th, 1674: "He regulates his conduct principally by the visions and revelations of his devotees. It is sufficient to know this to cause Father Eudes to be considered a visionary."

Among the Jansenists this conviction only grew with time. In a pamphlet published at the end of the eighteenth century they drew a comparison between Father Eudes and M. Longuet, and between St. Margaret Mary and Marie des Vallées. "Father Eudes introduced the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and afterwards that of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. We may, however, believe that M. Longuet is the Father Eudes of this century as Father Eudes was the M. Longuet of the last. Alacoquistes is the name which suits them, unless, because they both originate from a Mary, one would prefer calling them marions, marionettes, or mariettes. These two devotions have for originators two fanatical women, full of extravagant ideas, the first is named Marie des Vallées, and the second Marie Alacoque."

By a just judgment of divine Providence, the injuries lavishly showered on the first apostle of the Sacred Heart have become proofs of his extraordinary mission. Still, they are not enough to prove a fact of such importance. The question can only be settled by Father Eudes' own explicit testimony. Here and there in his writings significant allusions are found. In one place he says he considers it a great grace that God allowed him to receive Marie des Vallées' revelations. "In the month of August, 1641, God granted me one of the greatest favours I have received from His Goodness, for it was at that time that I made the acquaintance of Sister Marie des Vallées, through whom God has given signal graces. After God I owe this favour to the Blessed Virgin, Our Lady and my Mother, whom I can never sufficiently thank. 'I thank

Thee, Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent of this world.'"

What were the signal graces here alluded to? Among others, they were the gifts of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Father Eudes considered he had a right to these two treasures he wished to bequeath to his two religious families. "With all the strength of my will I give myself to the incomprehensible love with which Jesus and my good Mother have given me their loving Heart in a special manner, and in union with the same love I give this same heart, which is mine, and of which I can dispose for the glory of God, to the little Congregation of Jesus and Mary." How could Father Eudes claim the hearts of Jesus and Mary as his own and bequeath them to his children if he had not received them in a special manner? In any case he considered himself as chosen by God to establish the feasts of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. "Our Congregation was the first in which the feasts of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary were solemnized. No attention is to be paid to the extreme and infinite unworthiness of him whom God would use; he was the last of men, the first of sinners, and the most unworthy of all priests, but the Mighty God, who made the whole world out of nothing, and who redeemed it without it having contributed the least thing to its redemption, is accustomed to choose the most vile things, the lowest and those which are not, with which to do what He pleases. Did He not use St. Juliana, a poor Cistercian nun, to prevail on Pope Urban IV. to establish the feast of the Blessed Sacrament?" (Père le Doré). St. Juliana was doubtless only a poor religious, but she had received an order from Heaven. Did Father Eudes also only act after a direct revelation? His enemies reproached him with it and he has insinuated it several times, as we have said. But sarcasm and

allusions are not positive proofs; a precise and formal affirmation is necessary.

The humility of the saints always leads them to keep secret their intimate communications with God. Excepting through obedience the writings of St. Gertrude and St. Mechtilde and St. Margaret Mary would never have been written, or else they would afterwards have been burnt. Father Eudes was Superior, he had not to obey but to rule. His humility caused him to hide his secrets and we shall only know them in eternity.

But in the Church there is another mission not given direct, by revelation from Our Lord. It is the permanent mission given at the institution of the Catholic priesthood: *Euntes docete.* In the power of these words the Sovereign Pontiffs and the Bishops teach the nations. Priests, under their authority and control, spread Christian doctrine among the people. This priestly mission will suffice for all the needs of the nations until the end of the world. So when heresies arise, without any need of revelation, the Church possesses by her divine institution the means of refuting the error and of reassuring her docile children. God often raises up a man, a doctor, who is as a torch in the midst of darkness and who becomes a light to the world. *Vos estis lux mundi.* The Arians deny the Divinity of Jesus Christ and St. Athanasius is the man chosen in the fourth century, and he becomes the doctor of the Divinity of Jesus Christ. In the following century Nestorius denies the divine Maternity, Pelagius, the necessity of divine Grace. SS. Cyril of Alexander and Augustine of Hippo are the men chosen by God to refute them. The first is the doctor of the divine Maternity, the second that of divine Grace. After the negations of Berengarius on the Holy Eucharist, St. Juliana of Liège begs for a feast in honour of Our Lord's Body and Blood, and St. Thomas composes the Mass and Office; he is the doctor of the Blessed

Sacrament. In modern times, in face of the errors of Protestantism, which exalts faith at the expense of good works and takes from man all confidence in his efforts, St. Francis de Sales shows how perfection is possible for people in the world; he strips the religious life of ancient austerities and makes it possible for weak constitutions; he is the doctor of true piety and the lawgiver for modern Communities. Jansenism appears, that hideous and hypocritical sect whose whole teaching is resumed in the denial of God's love for man; the God of Calvary has not saved them all, the God of the Eucharist only calls unto Him the Saints, the God of Grace does not extend His help to all. Pernicious affirmations which take away all confidence in Our Lord. For one might then ask: "But Has he redeemed me? Did He shed His Blood for me? Does He wish me to partake of His Banquet? Will He help me when my soul is in peril?"

As soon as this heretical doctrine was proclaimed in the famous books of Jansenius and Quesnel, a crusade of Catholic writers, of controversialists and of preachers, was formed for the defence of the truth. The Holy See repeatedly condemned these heretics, but they cleverly eluded the censures. In spite of all efforts the spirit of Jansenism pervaded all sections of the Church, including the most faithful and fervent religious communities. There seemed no doctor to oppose it. Salvation was to come from the Sacred Heart Itself. It seemed that a new revelation was needed of the riches of love and mercy, of which this Heart is the inexhaustible treasure-house. But who in the Catholic Church would be the first to open the breast of the Man-God and invite all souls to contemplate the Sacred Heart, Furnace of Love? It will be Father Eudes; he will be the first apostle of the Sacred Heart and Its doctor, as St. Thomas is doctor of the Blessed Sacrament.

CHAPTER III

THE IMPORTANCE OF BLESSED JOHN EUDES' MISSION AND HOW IT COMPLETES THAT OF SAINT MARGARET MARY

SAINT MARGARET MARY'S mission was miraculous and confirmed by the judgment of Holy Church. That of Bl. John Eudes was of an ordinary character and the consequence of the universal mission confided to the Christian priesthood. What conclusion can we draw from this difference? Must we listen to St. Margaret Mary's revelation and disdain Bl. John Eudes' teaching? By no means, as we shall later be told by Cardinal Pitra; if the one was an ambassador of the Sacred Heart to the Holy See, the other was also Its ambassador to peoples, pastors, princes of the world, and of the sanctuary. It was a double legation, but the same subject.

Private revelations have not ceased in the Church. God sends them when it pleases Him. These revelations are always subjected to a severe and searching investigation. An inexorable criticism discusses and compares them with what is in accordance with reason and philosophical science and the teaching of the Gospel tradition. The Church refuses her sanction until the doctrine received in private revelation is shown to be in harmony with the ordinary teaching of the Church. For this reason it was necessary to wait two centuries before obtaining a definite decision from the Holy See on the devotion to the Sacred Heart. This decision was only given in 1856 when Pius IX. gave to the Universal Church a Mass and Office in honour of the Sacred Heart. It was only then that the rule *Legem credendi statuat lex orandi* was applicable in all its doctrinal rigour. This

delay was caused by the numberless questions to which the devotion to the Sacred Heart gave rise, and the Holy See wished to settle them as they arose. How many lives were spent during these two centuries in discussions and study! And is it not marvellous that Bl. John Eudes should, alone, have answered all these questions which before his time had never been asked, with a doctrine so precise, with so great learning, with so exquisite a tact in his liturgical terms and with so much tender piety? How did he achieve such great labours? Ceaselessly he was traversing the roads of Normandy, Brittany, and Burgundy, preaching to the people. He had the care of two Congregations, just beginning, and was the director of a great number of souls. Notwithstanding so many absorbing occupations and the many contradictions they caused him, he still reveals to us the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Verily the finger of God is here!

CHAPTER IV

BLESSED JOHN EUDES GOES TO THE HEART OF JESUS THROUGH THE HEART OF MARY

ALL comes to us from God through Mary. By her consent to the Incarnation God gave His Son to the world. Bossuet says: "This order is not changed. It is and always will be true that having once received through Mary the universal principle of grace we still receive, by her intercession, its application. Her motherly charity having contributed so largely to our salvation in the mystery of the Incarnation, which is the universal principle of grace, she continues to contribute to it eternally in all lesser needs." There are no restrictions placed on the privilege of this universal Dispenser of God's gifts, whether we consider the indispensable graces necessary for the salvation of each soul, or the Providential help needed for the maintenance of the Church. For us poor sinners She is the Mother of Mercy, our life, our joy, our hope. For the Church She is as an army drawn up in battle array: *quasi acies ordinata.* The Church attributes her victories over heresy to Mary and also the ruin of her most implacable enemies, the Albigenses in the thirteenth century, and the Mahometans in the sixteenth.

According to this law confirmed by tradition and clearly shown in history, the Sacred Heart must also be revealed to the world as a second Mediator by Mary. This revelation is the last effort of the mercy of God towards sinners. It contains the spark that can rekindle the fire of charity in a world grown cold. For souls consecrated to God it will be a fruitful source of perfection and holiness. It is destined to re-establish the reign of Jesus Christ notwithstanding the united efforts of the

world and the devil. It will also utterly destroy this cold Jansenism which denies God's love.

But do not so many benefits necessitate Mary's intervention? Are they not consequences of the first great gift, Our Lord Himself? Are they not what we should expect to follow from the Incarnation, which is the greatest work written in the history of the Church? This intervention of Mary has not been brought sufficiently to the front in speaking of devotion to the Sacred Heart. Occupied principally in showing the validity of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, writers have only spoken of that of the Immaculate Heart of Mary as a consequence of devotion to the divine Heart.

"In the designs of God," says the Père Doré, "Mary is no doubt after Jesus, for Jesus is the reason of Mary's greatness and privileges. But in the execution of these same designs Mary precedes Jesus."

This admirable economy in the Providence of God must not be forgotten in the revelation of the Sacred Heart. It is really an historical fact, for the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary was celebrated in Father Eudes' house at Caen in 1646, and in the Cathedral of Autun in 1648.

CHAPTER V

THE APOSTLESHIP OF BLESSED JOHN EUDES

THE success of Bl. John Eudes' apostleship, whatever the character of his mission, is an historical fact of the greatest importance. Either purposely or through forgetfulness writers have ignored it. Some have shown a real vindictiveness in lessening it, so that after Bl. John Eudes' death he was as a sign that was contradicted. Cardinal Pitra has cleared the holy man's memory of this injustice by an admirable paragraph: "It would be difficult, in France, to speak of works inspired by the Sacred Heart without thinking of the Rev. John Eudes, who deserves to be called Its apostle. He was the first, during his long and active life, to propagate the new devotion; he dedicated to It the two congregations he founded, he instituted Its feasts, drew up Its Office, had books printed, built in Its honour churches and chapels and gave the impetus to a movement which has spread through the entire Church. He wished the first-fruits to be consecrated to the Immaculate Virgin, for the Mother ought to prepare the way for her divine Son. Therefore the Immaculate Heart is the furnace from which this new fire springs. And what do these two Hearts wish except that this fire should inflame and set the whole world on fire?

"Father Eudes is the doctor who gives the correct formula for the new devotion, explains Its theological foundation, replies to Its adversaries, determines Its practical and liturgical tense, assigns to It a rite, hymns and prayers, urges the establishment of feasts, congregations and episcopal ordinances destined to propagate and perpetuate the new institution. He was Its am-

bassador to the people, pastors, princes of the world and of the sanctuary. This long and serious preparation was necessary so that in her turn, leaving the splendour of her visions, the humble virgin of Paray should become the ambassadress of the Sacred Heart to the Apostolic See which, confounding heresy and satanic coldness, gives to the Church a proportionate consolation in her great sorrows " (Cardinal Pitra, *Life of P. Libermann*).

From this testimony of the learned Cardinal two facts are clear: that the work of Bl. John Eudes relating to the Immaculate Heart and the Sacred Heart was original and complete, and also that he was, before any other, the originator of the great impulse which carried all before it to the Sacred Heart.

CHAPTER VI

HIS TWO CONGREGATIONS

ACCORDING to the historians of this holy man he wished to inaugurate this devotion at once, when his two congregations were founded. The Rev. Father Martin says: " In order to do this, he resolved to make devotion to the divine Heart the foundation of the great undertaking of which he had conceived the idea, and to oblige all those who should enter the Congregation of Jesus and Mary to apply themselves constantly to meditate on the sublimity of this adorable Heart, to recognize Its goodness, to imitate Its virtues, and, above all, to establish their dwelling-place therein, certain of finding all that is necessary to enable them to work at their own perfection and the sanctification of souls.

" The Bl. John Eudes founded his congregation on the 25th of March, 1643, and as early as the following month of October he wrote to M. Mannoury a letter in which he directs him when and how the recitations of the Salutations of the Holy Heart of Mary are to be made; he also mentions two feasts which were to be kept each year in honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. These two Hearts which morally are only one."

The same idea was present in Father Eudes' mind when he formed and trained the religious of Our Lady of Charity. His dear daughters have preserved the rules and recommendations of the holy Founder wherein his intentions are expressed with so much faith and precision.

" The religious of Our Lady of Charity may humbly and piously exult in being the daughters of the most Holy Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, although infinitely

unworthy of the name. Besides possessing this in common with all Christians, that they have Jesus Christ for their Head and are His members, and consequently are but one with Him, who, according to St. Augustine, is the fruit more of the Heart than of the womb of this precious Virgin, and are thus the daughters of this same Heart; they besides possess this happiness in a more special and peculiar manner for three principal reasons.

"First, they are the daughters of the most loving Heart of the Mother of God, because the vocation of persons who are chosen by the divine Majesty to labour for the salvation of erring souls, takes its origin after a particular manner in the most charitable Heart of Jesus, all inflamed with love for these same souls, which is but one Heart with that of His most Holy Mother. For although the divine Heart is the source of all good projects, of all holy institutes and of all works of piety, it is so nevertheless in a most special manner of those which have for their immediate object the salvation of sinful souls, that being the one thing in the world which It most desires and in which It takes most interest, since this merciful Saviour assures us that He came into the world for the sake, not of the just, but for sinners.

"Secondly, this Queen of the hearts consecrated to Jesus has made it evident that they are the well-beloved daughters of Her Heart, by the very particular love She has testified towards them, in giving them a large share in that which, after God, She most loved in this world, namely, the cross of Her Son, having permitted that they should bear a great number of all sorts of crosses, contradictions, and tribulations for the space of more than ten years; as also by the special care which this Maternal Heart had taken to provide them with all that is necessary, spiritually as well as temporally, to dispel a very great number of obstacles that presented themselves to the foundation of this congregation, and

to dispose things in such a manner that by a secret and admirable direction, notwithstanding the efforts of hell, and when all appeared to be overthrown, it was established, contrary to all human expectation, on the day of the feast of this same Heart, the 8th of February.

"Thirdly, when it pleased God to inspire with the project of this congregation the hearts of those whom His divine Majesty employed to form it, He also gave them the thought of dedicating it in honour of the most perfect Heart of His most Holy Mother, to which, in fact, it has been dedicated and consecrated, in order that the persons who shall be received into it may endeavour to imprint on their hearts a perfect image and an exact resemblance of the very holy life and of the exalted virtues of the most Sacred Heart of their compassionate Mother, and that by this means they should render themselves worthy to be the true daughters of the most loving Heart of the Mother of beautiful Love.

"I prostrate myself, with my whole heart, at the Sacred Feet of the King and Queen of Heaven in presence of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, with all the humility and devotion of all the hearts which are consecrated to Them, and supplicating Them from the depths of my soul by Their most holy Hearts inflamed with love for Their children to grant:

"First, that no one who shall enter this house may write her name in this book, except those whom They themselves have chosen and called to serve and honour Them by labouring for the salvation of sinful souls;

"Second, that those who shall write it there may do so *corde magno et animo volenti;* that is, with a generous heart and a most devoted will, and for the pure love and sole glory of God;

"Third, that the year, the day, and the hour on which each Sister shall inscribe her vows and oblations in this book, may be to her a year of mercy and of remis-

sion of all her sins, a day of benediction and sanctification for her soul and body, and an hour of perpetual and inviolable confirmation in the grace and love of God;

"Fourth, that the names of those who shall be inscribed upon this paper may be written for an eternity upon the divine Heart of Jesus, Son of Mary, and of Mary, Mother of Jesus;

"Fifth, that divine love may engrave upon their hearts all the rules and constitutions and holy customs of this congregation, and that these same hearts may be sacred books and living gospels in which the most Holy Life of their most loving Father and most dear Mother, Jesus and Mary, may be for ever imprinted;

"Sixth, that the hearts of all may be so many living types of the most pure love, most exalted charity, profound humility, most exact obedience, a more than angelic purity, of invincible patience, childlike meekness, the simplicity of the dove, entire submission to the will of God, complete self-abnegation, perfect contempt of the world, most ardent zeal for the salvation of souls, devoted affection for the cross, and all the other most eminent virtues which reign in the divine Heart of Jesus and the most pure Heart of Mary;

"Seventh, that these same hearts may form but one heart together by the sacred link of the most perfect charity, and that they may be but one heart with the most sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary by virtue of divine love;

"Eighth, that this united heart may be the throne of the divine will, that It may reign there absolutely, that It may be consumed in the flames of eternal Love, and that as a sacred host It may be continually sacrificed to the praise and glory of the most Holy Trinity.

"These are the truly ardent desires of my heart, O Jesus, Son of Mary, and Mary, Mother of Jesus, which I offer to Yours full of tenderness, and which I have the

intention of offering at every moment of my life and by all the movements and pulsations of mine. Listen to them, I beseech You, bless them and let them be accomplished by Your great mercy and for the glory of Your Holy Name. Amen."

The holy man had founded a refuge for sinful souls. The faithful soul also seeks a resting-place. Blessed Father Eudes indicates to his daughters where they are to find their dwelling here below.

"It is to you, my very dear Sisters, that I now lift up my voice and address my words, bidding you as daughters beloved by the most sweet Heart of the Mother of Love to dwell in this maternal Heart of your most dear Mother, which is but one with the divine Heart of Her Son Jesus. Let It be the place of your repose, your holy refuge, your impregnable fortress, your garden of delights, your terrestrial paradise.

"Live the life of this blessed Heart, possess Its sentiments, enter into Its dispositions, follow Its inclinations, love what It loves, hate that only which It hates, desire only what It desires, rejoice in nothing but that which pleases It, fear only what It would fear, were It still capable of fear; grieve only over what would afflict It, could It still be made sorrowful; labour for the accomplishment of Its designs, give yourself unceasingly to the Spirit which animates It, that this same Spirit may possess and guide you in all things, that Its grace may sanctify you, Its charity inflame you, Its love consume you, and, above all, Its zeal for the salvation of souls may devour you.

"In fine, engrave this truth upon your hearts—that you are the daughters of the most holy Heart of the Queen of Heaven. Never forget this beautiful name; keep it always before your eyes, impress it on your mind, imprint it on the inmost recesses of your soul, bear it on your hands, carry it in your mouth; that is, act in such

a manner, by the grace of God, that all your thoughts and affections, all your words and actions, may tend to make you worthy daughters of the most holy Heart of the Mother of Jesus and to please and rejoice this same Heart in every way possible to you. But especially by observing exactly your rules and constitutions and faithfully keeping your vows to God, above all, the fourth vow which you have made to employ yourselves in the conversion and instruction of souls that have wandered from the right path.

" Know, my very dear Sisters, that whilst you remain in this holy employment which associates you in a wonderful manner with the Saviour of the world, with His most precious Mother and with His Apostles and with all the Saints who have been called by God to this same exercise, you will be the true daughters of the most holy Heart of the Mother of God, who will look upon you and love you as such and will heap upon you every kind of favour and blessing. But if under any pretext whatever you withdraw yourselves from this work, you will at once lose this beautiful title, your name will no longer be daughters of the most Sacred Heart of Mary, Mother of Jesus, but daughters of Belial, the blessing of Heaven will withdraw itself from you, and its malediction will come upon you. May it please the divine Goodness not to permit that you should fall into this misfortune. I supplicate the Mother of Mercy by all the tenderness of Her maternal Heart that from the moment you should deviate from it She would afflict you so effectually as to oblige you to return to the path of your vocation, in order that after devoting all your time and strength for the same object as that for which our adorable Jesus devoted His Blood and His Life, you may be found at the hour of your death in full accord with the Heart of God. That you may breathe out your soul into the bosom and Heart of your most tender Mother and

repose eternally with Her and Her beloved Son in the bosom and Heart of the Eternal Father, there to praise, glorify, and love unceasingly, along with Jesus and Mary and with all Their children, the most Holy Trinity through all eternity. Amen."

The two congregations founded by Bl. John Eudes were therefore sources of devotion to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. They were besides a group of apostles who by their zeal were to propagate it throughout the years to come. A new family, as the liturgy says, had flowered in the Church. It was born of the Holy Heart of Mary, and for inheritance had received the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

CHAPTER VII

HIS MISSIONS AND SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

THE ministry of Missions, the work of the Seminaries and the direction of pious people afforded Father Eudes so many means of exercising his apostleship in favour of his dear devotion. He did not fail to profit by them.

Bl. John Eudes was a true missionary. He passionately loved souls and only lived to save them. With St. Paul he had the right to say: *Impendam et superimpendar.* He placed at their service all the resources of his learning, the tenderness of his ardent and intrepid heart (*ardens et audax*) and every instant of his life. Perhaps no missionary ever gave so many missions as he during his fifty years' labour. His zeal never in the least decreased. When nearly eighty, the old apostle grieved much that he had contracted an infirmity which would prevent him ever again attempting the hard work of giving missions. Father Eudes wished to give souls the Hearts of Jesus and Mary as pledges of perseverance and salvation. One of his enemies said: " Father Eudes is so firmly persuaded of the power of devotion to the Heart of Mary that he dares to say that it is impossible for Our Lord to refuse anything souls ask of Him, if it is not contrary to His glory and their salvation, if it is asked through the most pure Heart of His Holy Mother !" In spite of Jansenistical bursts of fury, Bl. John Eudes continued his work. From 1640 he never preached a mission without making the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary known and loved.

And, indeed, Bl. John Eudes' labours were crowned with success. His zeal aroused the enthusiasm of the populations, the gratitude and admiration of the priests. He took advantage of these favourable dispositions to erect

among the people confraternities in honour of the Sacred Hearts and to obtain from the Bishops an approbation for his offices and feasts. In 1648 he obtained from the Bishop of Autun the establishment in his diocese of the feast of the most Pure Heart of Mary. Confraternities were erected at Dijon, Beame, Chalon, La Fère, Meaux, Paris, and in all the towns and in many of the villages of Normandy. Brittany also with its ardent faith warmly took up the new devotion, and associations of the Sacred Heart were multiplied at Rennes, Dôle, Guingamp, Morlaix, Tréguier, and at Vannes " (Père le Doré).

He also began the Third Order under the name of the Society of the Heart of the Admirable Mother.

He also took advantage of his influence with several communities to persuade them to adopt his favourite devotion. St. Benedict's daughters were the most zealous in responding to his desires. He writes to a religious of Montmartre: " I cast you all, every day, as far as I can, into the depths of the furnace of divine Love, with the greatest possible desire that you may be entirely inflamed and consumed for ever by the sacred flames of this divine furnace. The Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary are this furnace of Love whose flames and fire only touch hearts. Oh ! happy are the souls who are lost in these divine flames !"

Bl. John Eudes wished to cast the entire world into this furnace of love. He wished at least that all those trained in his seminaries should be inflamed and consumed by the fire from the Sacred Hearts. All the seminary chapels were consecrated to Them, congregations established on the model of those under the Jesuits were placed under their patronage; the members obliged themselves to recite a little office composed by Father Eudes himself. The pupils as well as their masters were to recite daily the beautiful salutation *Ave Cor*. The Sacred Hearts blessed the holy man's zeal. " It may

truly be said that to his teaching and to that of his children the clergy of Normandy owe their regularity and an infinite number of good works performed by them " (Hermant, Curé of Maltot).

The Sacred Heart rewarded Its apostle by granting him two great graces. The first was the building of the seminary chapel of Coutance and Caen. The holy man could not contain himself for joy that he had erected the two first sanctuaries dedicated to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. A second favour certainly not less appreciated by him was the approbation of his dear devotion by the Holy See. In 1674 Monsieur de Bonnefonds, one of the priests of his congregation, obtained from Clement X. a brief permitting the erection of a confraternity in the chapel of the seminary at Coutance. At this news, overcome with joy, Father Eudes wrote these lines to Father de Bonnefonds: " What immense consolation your letter gave me! Eternal praise to the adorable Heart of Jesus for having inspired yours to obtain this! Eternal thanks to the Heart of our loving Mother for having helped you so powerfully in this business. May all Heaven redouble its prayers for the preservation and sanctification of our Holy Father, Pope Clement X. May Jesus and Mary make you according to Their own Hearts and may They guide you so well that you may, if possible, do for the other houses what you have done for that of Coutance."

This desire of Bl. John Eudes was granted. Similar briefs were addressed to the other houses.

In his Memoirs Father Eudes says: " In the year 1674 our very dear brother, James de la Haye de Bonnefonds, being in Rome, sent us several bulls from our Holy Father, Pope Clement X.: one giving us permission to give missions in any part of France, with a plenary indulgence; another bull confirming the rules of our congregation, and six others for our houses of Caen, Rouen, Coutance,

Lisieux, Evreux, and Rennes, giving us power to establish confraternities in honour of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary in our churches and chapels with great indulgences. These churches and chapels are named in the bulls, by our Holy Father, the Churches and Chapels of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, which gave me, in the midst of my troubles, very great consolation. Thanksgivings, great and eternal, be rendered to the Sacred Hearts !"

CHAPTER VIII

THE FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

FATHER EUDES had at first offered to the love and veneration of the faithful the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary in their admirable union. The Heart of Mary had, no doubt, the largest part in the first office, though Father Eudes included the Heart of Jesus in it. Criticism raised by the Jansenists, the more profound study of the Sacred Hearts, the more exact knowledge of liturgical laws, obliged him to greater precision in the expression of his doctrine and devotion. As far back as the year 1653 he had resolved to have two distinct feasts celebrated, and in 1659 he began the composition of a special office for the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Ten years were to pass before the holy man could get the feast established which had been the object of so many prayers and desires. Obliged to face obstacles of all kinds he was constrained to defer the execution of his design. The Jansenists made perpetual war against him; even his name aroused their fury, but the athlete of the devotion to the Sacred Heart continued his work with that tenacity and constancy which came from sanctity.

He continued to beg new approbations from the Bishops for the office of the Holy Heart of Mary. The most important of all, on account of the official position of the person, was granted to him by the Cardinal of Vendôme, legate *a latere* of the Holy See, on the 2nd of July, 1668. The way, therefore, was getting more and more clear. The Sacred Heart of Jesus could appear before Its worshippers with all the splendour of our most beautiful feasts.

The institution of such a solemnity is a great event in the Church, and should the man employed by God as His instrument not receive a consecration? When the Sacred Heart sent St. Margaret Mary as the messenger of Its desires, It exacted from her a complete consecration of herself to Him. The contract was to be formally drawn up with the Superior signing the act as authentic. St. Margaret Mary signed it with her blood. Bl. John Eudes was inspired to make a similar act. When still a boy at the Jesuits' college he had chosen the Blessed Virgin as his Spouse. In the year 1688 he wished to renew his contract with the Mother of God.

CHAPTER IX

JESUS, MARY, JOSEPH.—CONTRACT OF ALLIANCE WITH THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN MOTHER OF GOD

O INCOMPARABLE and loving Mary, Mother of God, only Daughter of the Eternal Father, Mother of God the Son, Spouse of the Holy Spirit, Queen of Heaven and earth, it is not astonishing that Thou wilt allow thyself to be called the Spouse of the last of men, of the greatest of sinners who had dared choose Thee from his tenderest years to be his only love and to consecrate to Thee entirely his body, heart and soul. It was because Thou wouldst imitate the infinite goodness of Thy Divine Son who also wills to be the Spouse of a sinful, miserable soul. May all angels, saints, creatures, and even the Creator praise and bless Thee eternally, and may they repair for me all my ingratitude and numberless infidelities against Thee.

As Thou hast already shown me so much goodness, O most kind of all creatures, deign to accept the conditions of the holy alliance that I am about to write on this paper: it will be the contract, or, rather, a copy of the contract, of which I beg the Holy Spirit to be the notary to write it in Thy Heart and in mine, in letters of pure gold, which shall be ineffaceable.

Instead of the bridegroom being the superior of his bride and she subject to his authority, I wish to respect and honour Thee as my Queen and Sovereign Lady, and I will that my whole being and all that appertains to it may be entirely subject to Thy power so that Thou mayest dispose of it as Thou wilt.

Instead of a part of the bride's dowry remaining in the hands of the bridegroom, which he uses at his pleasure,

I wish to keep nothing, nor appropriate anything, of the dowry Thou bringest to me: the great favours and graces which the Heavenly Father has granted me through Thee, with all my heart I renounce drawing from them any personal interest whatever, but I place them in Thy hands with all their fruits, so that Thou mayest return them all to their Source, to whom alone all glory is due.

At the death of the bridegroom only a part of his goods come to his bride, but, most venerable Lady, my intention is, that all that I am, all that I can do, all that I have, whether of soul or body, according to nature or grace, all that I hope for in glory, and in general all that belongs to me, spiritually or temporally, or that in any way depends on me, may be entirely Thine, with no reserve, so that Thou mayest do with all whatever it shall please Thee: but all that is really nothing. Oh, if I had a hundred millions of worlds, with what joy I would give them to Thee, my divine Mistress! Alas! if by an impossibility I had a divine being, like Thy Son Jesus, with what happiness I would give it to Thee in union with the same love with which He gave Himself to Thee.

Instead of the bride having to make herself as much as possible like to her bridegroom according to those divine words: *Faciamus homini adjutorium simile sibi*, I wish with all my heart to study to become like Thee, my Queen, by a careful imitation of Thy holy life and many virtues. I beg of Thee to use the power given Thee by God to destroy in me all obstacles to this, and to imprint on me Thy living image and perfect resemblance.

As the bridegroom and his bride must live in the same house, I wish to live with Thee in the loving Heart of Jesus which is also Thy Heart. Grant, I beg of Thee, that I may never leave It and that I may have no other dwelling-place for time and eternity.

As the bride is inseparable from the bridegroom and

is always with him, I supplicate Thee, my good Mother, to be with me always, everywhere and in all I do, to conduct and guide me, in all things, according to the adorable will of Thy divine Son.

As the honour of the bride, which is the glory of the bridegroom, must be very dear and precious to him, I also protest that I wish particularly to honour and to cause Thee to be honoured in every way possible to me with the help of God's grace.

As the bridegroom and his bride should love each other very sincerely and cordially, I have constant proofs of Thy incomparable goodness towards me, and Thou seest also the ardour and tenderness of my love for Thee. Oh, my Holy Mother, what do I wish for or love in Heaven or on earth except Thee, after Thy Jesus and mine? Oh, after God, the only object of my love, what would I not do and suffer for Thy love? I know there is nothing more pleasing to Thy divine Son and to Thee than to labour for the salvation of souls; Thou seest the feelings of my heart on this subject. Oh, why have I not the hearts of all men and angels with all the strength of love that is and ever shall be, to love Jesus, Son of Mary, and Mary, Mother of Jesus? But even that would not satisfy me; it needs the Heart of a God to love worthily, a Man-God and a Mother of God. Thanks be to God that I have One at my disposal. For Jesus having given Himself entirely to me, His Heart is consequently mine. Yes, the Heart of Jesus is my heart. It is with the love of this Heart that I love my good Saviour and His Holy Mother and that I wish to love Them strongly, ardently, and tenderly. Them only and for ever. I wish to love nothing except what They love, to hate nothing except what They hate, to rejoice in nothing except in what pleases Them, nor to sorrow for anything except what is displeasing to Them. I wish to place all my consolation and delight in thinking of

Them, in conversing with Them, in speaking of Them and hearing Them spoken of, in serving Them, in suffering for Their love, and to die ten thousand times, if it were possible, for Jesus and Mary.

As the bridegroom and the bride are obliged to assist each other in their infirmities, illnesses, and sorrows, my wish is to serve, help, and console Thee as much as I can, with God's grace, in the person of the poor, the afflicted and the sick, in whom I shall see the Mother, in her children. I beg of Thee also, O good Lady, to assist, protect, and support me in all my needs, corporal and spiritual.

As the bridegroom and the bride should only have one heart and one soul, grant also, O Queen of my heart, that I may have but one soul, one mind, one will, and one heart with Thee. To accomplish this take away my heart and give me Thine, according to Thy word, that I may sing eternally:

O qualis hæc Benignitas!
Ardens Mariæ Caritas
Meum sibi cor abstulit
Suum mihi Cor præbuit.

May the Sacred Heart of my loving Mother be the soul of my soul and the spirit of my spirit; may this Heart be the principle of my life and of all my thoughts, words and actions; may I bear all my sorrows and afflictions with love and charity, humility, submission, and patience, according to the dispositions of this Holy Heart. As the bride should redouble her care and love for the bridegroom at the end of his life and especially at the hour of his death, I beg of Thee, O the well-beloved of my soul, to be present and near me in my last days and at my last hour, according to Thy promise, to protect me from the enemies of my salvation, to strengthen and console me, to prepare me for a happy death, associating me with Thee in the holy dispositions in which Thou

didst die, so that Thou mayst receive my soul, when it quits this body, into Thy arms and Heart (for Thou art my Mother and Spouse, as Thou art the Mother and Spouse of my Jesus), bearing it away with Thee to Heaven, so that I may praise and glorify eternally the most Holy Trinity, with Thee and with all the angels and saints.

As the bride must take care of the children that the bridegroom has left after his death, I supplicate Thee, my dear Mother, to take care of all the spiritual children given me by God who are also Thy children, as He gave them to me by Thee. I place them all now in Thy hands, begging of Thee to help them so efficaciously that not one of them may perish.

Behold, the conditions of the contract which Thou hast inspired me to make with Thee, O Queen of Heaven! As with the most holy bride of my spirit and heart, I beg of Thee again to accept it and to sign it with Thy virginal blood, as I will sign it with my blood, ardently desiring to sign it with the last drop of blood in my heart. Grant that it may be accepted and signed by the Eternal Father, who is also my Father; by Thy Son Jesus and my Redeemer, and by Thy Spouse the Holy Spirit, by Thy father St. Joachim, by thy mother St. Anne, and by St. Joseph, Thy Spouse. And may Thy holy Angel Guardian St. Gabriel, and my holy Angel, St. John the Evangelist, St. John the Baptist, and all the Saints who have borne a particular devotion to Thee during life, and all the Saints, sign this contract, as witnesses, and may the Holy Spirit place thereon His eternal seal and His divine Love. Amen. Amen. *Fiat! Fiat!*

Written at Caen, in the house of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, Saturday, April 28th, 1668.—JOHN EUDES, Priest and Missionary of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

"This hymn of love Bl. John Eudes drew from his heart in honour of his divine Bride. He wished that this

prayer signed with his blood should after his death be laid on his heart and buried with him."—MARTIN.

He who in such terms could show his love for his admirable Mother was worthy to be the one chosen by the Sacred Heart to establish Its Feast. The occasion presented itself quite naturally, as it had done for the Feast of the Immaculate Heart. Father Eudes had been giving a great mission at Rennes. The exercises had begun with Advent, 1669, and they lasted until the Octave of Easter, 1670. The mission bore great fruit, and gained for the holy missionary the respect and affection of both people and clergy. Mgr. de la Vieuxville wished then to entrust him with the direction of the seminary. In the necessary documents the Bishop of Rennes gave permission to celebrate the Feast of the Sacred Heart. "We permit priests of the congregation to celebrate solemnly every year on the 31st of August the Feast of the adorable Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ, with an octave, and for this purpose to use the office and Mass written for this Feast—*March 8th*, 1670."

The 31st of August being found inconvenient later on, the date was changed to the 20th of October. Without losing any time Father Eudes begged of all the Bishops whose seminaries were directed by his children the same permission. It was granted by Mgr. de Léoménie de Brienne, Bishop of Coutance, the 29th of July, 1670, by Mgr. Maupas du Tour, Bishop of Evreux, 8th of October, 1670, by Mgr. de Harlay, Archbishop of Rouen, 3rd of February, 1671, by Mgr. Francis de Nesmond, Bishop of Bayeux, 16th of March, 1671, and lastly by Mgr. Léonor de Matignon, Bishop of Lisieux, on 24th of September, 1671.

After having obtained all these approbations Father Eudes ordered his children to keep in perpetuity the Feast of the Sacred Heart on the 20th of October. On this occasion he wrote a circular letter from Paris which

confirms our statements and proves the priority of his apostleship before those of St. Margaret Mary and Father de la Columbière. It is dated July 21st, 1672.

"My Dear and Well-Beloved Brothers,

"Our adorable Master has granted us an immense grace in giving to our congregation the Heart of His most Holy Mother. But His Goodness, which has no limits, has not stopped there, but has given us much more in giving us His own Heart to be, with that of His glorious Mother, the Founder and Superior, the Principle and End, the Heart and Life of this congregation. He gave us this great gift even at the birth of this congregation, for though, up to this time, we have not celebrated the particular feast of the adorable Heart of Jesus, we have never intended to separate what God had so intimately united, as are the Sacred Hearts of the Son of God and that of His Holy Mother. Quite the contrary. From the beginning our intention has always been to look upon and honour these two loving Hearts as one same Heart, being united in mind, disposition, will, and affection as is sufficiently shown in the Salutation that we say every day in honour of the Sacred Hearts, as also in the prayers and in many places in the Office and Mass that we celebrate in honour of the Immaculate Heart. But our Heavenly Father, who arranges all things with wonderful wisdom, willed that the feast of the Immaculate Heart should be celebrated before that of the Heart of Her Son, in order to prepare the way in the hearts of the faithful for the veneration of this adorable Heart and to dispose them to obtain from Heaven the favour of this second feast by the fervour with which they celebrated the first. For though, at first, this feast of Our Lady was opposed by the spirit of the world, which always persecutes all that comes from God, yet as soon as it was known to those who are devout

to the Mother of God they received it with joy and celebrated it for several years with great enthusiasm, and to-day it is solemnized all over France and in many religious orders and congregations with so great blessings that there is reason to hope that it will, one day, be celebrated over the whole world.

"It is this ardent devotion of the true children of Mary which has caused Her to obtain of Her divine Son the signal favour of granting to His Church a feast in honour of His adorable Heart which will be a new source of grace to all those who celebrate it holily. But who will not do so? What more worthy, more holy, or greater could there be than that which is the principle of all that is great, holy and venerable in all other solemnities? What Heart is more adorable, more loving, more admirable than the heart of the Man-God, JESUS?

"What honour does this Heart deserve which has always rendered more glory and love to God each moment than the hearts of all men and angels could render to Him during eternity! What a great zeal we ought to have to promote the veneration of this Holy Heart, which is the source of our salvation and of all happiness and graces to the earth, which is a living furnace of love for us, and which day and night only thinks of doing us good, which died for us on the cross, as the Son of God and His Holy Mother told St. Bridget! If the novelty of this devotion is objected to, I reply that novelty in the things of faith is pernicious, but that, in the things that increase our piety, it is good: otherwise we should have to condemn all the feasts established by the Church which were all new when instituted; we might specially mention those established lately, as the feasts of the most Holy Sacrament, the Name of Jesus, the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady, the Name of Mary,

the feast of Her Prodigies, Our Lady of Pity, Her Expectation, Our Lady of Victories in the diocese of Paris, many others, and a great number of feasts that have been added to the Roman Breviary. If it is said that all this is done by the authority of the Holy See I reply with St. Francis de Sales and a great number of illustrious and learned prelates and doctors that each Bishop, especially in France, has the same power in this matter as the Sovereign Pontiff for the whole Church. (Bl. John Eudes makes a mistake here, excusable in his time. One of the Bishops, he cites, the Bishop of Saint-Pons, wrote in 1686 a book claiming this right, but it was condemned by Benedict XIV. and placed on the index in 1701. Bishops can only establish new feasts with consent from the Holy See. Indeed, Bl. John Eudes always acted so.)

" Let us therefore, my very dear Brothers, be grateful for the great grace and favour granted by our good Master to our congregation in giving it His own adorable Heart and that of His Holy Mother. They are two priceless treasures, containing untold heavenly graces which they bestow on the faithful. Let us humble ourselves to the dust in considering our unworthiness for such great favours. Let us feel great gratitude towards our loving Saviour and His most dear Mother and ours. Let us never cease to bless and glorify Them and to invite the Saints and all creatures to bless and thank Them with us. Let us rejoice in the solemnity of the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

" I enclose the Mass and Office which have been approved by the Bishop. To celebrate this feast; first invite all your friends and the pious persons you are acquainted with. Second, if you receive this letter in time, cause it to be published, if possible preach on it. Third, fast on the eve of the feast. Fourth, give a

dinner to twelve poor men in the refectory on the eve or the day after the feast. The Office for the Octave is not yet printed so I cannot send it to you. Lastly, I beg of you, my very dear Brothers, to celebrate this feast with all possible solemnity and devotion and write and tell me how it passed, and so you will cause great joy to him who ardently desires for you the greatest blessings from our good Saviour and His sweet Mother, and who in the sacred love of Their divine Hearts is entirely yours.

"JOHN EUDES,
"*Missionary priest.*"

The Communities which had received the Office of the Holy Heart of Mary were not long in accepting the new Office of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. One of the first was the celebrated Benedictine Abbey of Montmartre, so that the Sacred Heart was honoured on this holy hill nearly a century before the concession granted by Clement XII. in 1765.

The new feast, of course, was the cause of much contention which caused Father Eudes great sorrow during the last years of his life. When only his person was attacked he kept silence, but when the interests of the Sacred Hearts were threatened he showed all his old energy. The following letter is an admirable proof:

"MADAM,

"Although I have not the honour of being known to you I yet take the liberty of writing to tell you of the sorrow I feel at hearing that you have not only forbidden, in your monastery, the celebration of the feast of the most Holy Heart of Mary but also of the divine Heart of Jesus. Oh, Madam, what are you thinking of? The Abbesses, your predecessors, who were so full of wisdom and virtue, established these feasts through the singular

devotion they had for the glorious Virgin, Our Lady, and you, you have destroyed their work! Is this to your honour? What will they say to you on the day of judgment? What are you doing, Madam? The divine Goodness had placed these two feasts in your house as two fountains of grace and blessing and you hinder their flow. The Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary were two impregnable towers, where the souls of the Abbess and her daughters might always find safety from their enemies, and you destroy them.

"You strike and wound the Heart of the Mother of beautiful Love. You excommunicate Her venerable Name and most holy Heart, you drive them from your house. After that, how dare you appear before Her? Do you not fear that Her Son, who resents any insult offered to His Mother, might send you some great misfortune and they should close the doors of Their home against you? They had given you Their Heart which is only one, by unity of disposition, to be your heart, your treasure and your consolation, and you reject It. How will you live without a heart? Might you not be called *Columba seducte* (Osee vii. 11). A dove led astray who has no longer a heart? The Mother of God had given you Her Heart as a shelter in all your troubles, and an immense treasure-house filled with all you could desire, according to the words of a holy prelate of your Order, *Fons infinitorum bonorum*, and you refuse It, you wish to give It up? You do away with a great feast established with the approbation of a great number of Bishops on the authority of the legate *a latere*, and on the unassailable rock of the Holy Apostolic See, approved by numbers of holy priests, celebrated theologians, and also by many great Saints and very fervent men, members of the Order of St. Benedict, who have left us tokens of their devotion to this Holy Heart, when

they were on earth, and who now celebrate Its praises in Heaven.

"In God's Name, Madam, consider attentively these things and receive them from the hand which gives them to you from pure charity, and also from the hand of one who has for you the greatest respect."

CHAPTER X

DEATH OF FATHER EUDES

THOSE who are devoted to the Sacred Heart are promised a happy death. And the Master of life and death has willed to show us in the last moments of the apostles of His Heart some signs of what He reserves for us. Like St. Gertrude, Father Eudes had composed an exercise to prepare for death, besides his annual retreat; this occupied ten days. From the year 1673 he had drawn up a list of things he wished to do at his last hour. The same thought had caused him to insert this paragraph in his will:

"If I should lose consciousness and be unable to express myself I consent with all my heart to all the acts of faith, hope, charity, humility, resignation, contrition, and others that shall be made for me, either in Heaven or on earth, humbly begging my dear Brothers, my good angel, St. Michael, St. Gabriel and the other angels, St. Joseph, St. Joachim, St. Anne, St. John Baptist, St. John Evangelist, St. Lazarus, St. Martha, St. Mary Magdalen, the holy Apostles, the holy Martyrs, holy priests and virgins, the holy Innocents, and all the Saints in Heaven, above all, my divine Mother, to supply for my defects and to render all I owe to God, and to do for me whatever shall be most pleasing to God, protesting that I wish that every throb of my heart and of my veins and my every breath should be as many acts of contrition, resignation, praise, and love for my Creator and Saviour."

With all the Saints Father Eudes considered that death, on the part of the Christian, should be accepted as an act of virtue, a real sacrifice, united to the Sacrifice of Our Lord on the cross.

On the 26th of June, 1680, he had gathered together

his children and made them accept his resignation as Superior. Though now free from the solicitude of government he yet felt much responsibility. His book on the admirable Heart was not finished. He worked hard at it, using thus the remainder of his strength on the great work of his whole life. At last, a month after his resignation, he was able to write: "To-day, the 25th of July, 1680, God has enabled me to finish my book on the Admirable Heart of the Mother of God." The valiant soldier of the Sacred Heart could then be relieved from the post of honour where he had fought for forty years. The next day he began his retreat with the conviction that it would be his preparation for death. In his last visit to the daughters of Our Lady of Charity he foretold the approaching end. He had scarcely returned to his cell when he was seized with a violent fever which with his other infirmities caused him great suffering. One day when in great pain one of the Fathers asked him if he suffered much. "Horribly," he replied. "Well, Father, would you not willingly suffer these pains for the love of Our Lord?" "Ah, yes, with all my heart, with all my heart! Yes, my Saviour, with all my heart I accept the pains Thou dost send me. It is only just, my God, that a criminal should suffer as the Innocent has borne so much. It is only right that the servant should suffer when the Master has borne so much. Yes, my God, with my whole heart, since Thou dost will it so. Thou knowest I have never had other will than Thine. Do with me as Thou wilt."

Feeling himself getting worse he begged for the Holy Viaticum. As soon as he perceived the most Holy Sacrament he threw himself on his knees. Supported by two Brothers, he began an act of reparation for the numberless sins he said he had committed, and made many beautiful acts of resignation, of abandonment of

himself and of all he cared for, of acceptance of death, and many others. He then begged pardon of all his children, present or absent, for all the pain he might have given them; he wished for them every blessing, offering them all to Our Lord and His Holy Mother, encouraging them to observe faithfully their rules and constitutions. He then received Holy Communion, and prolonged his thanksgiving with the same fervour with which he had made his preparation. He spent a long time making fervent acts of love for Him whom he had the happiness of possessing, wishing that every breath and pulsation of his heart were acts of perfect love and entire submission to God's holy will, of profound humility, filial confidence in His goodness and mercy. After which, turning himself towards our Blessed Lady he said lovingly: *Maria Mater gratiæ*, and then, *Monstra Te esse Matrem.* He then said farewell to all created things so as to occupy himself in future with God alone and with the desire to possess Him. He could be heard from time to time repeating the loving words: *Jesus meus et Omnia; Dilectus meus mihi; Veni, Domine Jesu; Unum volo, unum quæro, unum amo.*

He also received the Sacrament of Extreme Unction with a presence of mind and piety extraordinary. He himself answered all the prayers of the Church with a lively faith and sincere compunction at the thought of the sins he had committed, by each sense, as it was anointed. He then used the short time left to him in repeating ejaculations that he addressed to God with great love. He himself consoled his children who were grieving at the thought of losing a Father so loving and devoted. "Why do you weep, my Brothers? Is it not right that I should pay to nature the tribute that is her due, that we must all pay, as our fathers have paid it before us, and from which no one is dispensed? Rather rejoice that I am soon to be taken out of this valley of

tears where I languish so long and enter into possession of the great things promised and prepared for us in Heaven. Only pagans and they who have no hope of eternal happiness ought to be afflicted at the loss of their friends and relations."

In these admirable dispositions Father Eudes gave up his beautiful soul to God on Monday, the 19th of August, 1680, at the age of seventy-nine years.

The priests of the conference at Combremer composed an epitaph in his honour. We will only give the part concerning his apostleship of the Sacred Heart:

EPITAPH

TANTO ERGA SACRATISSIMUM COR JESU ET MARIÆ
RAPIEBATUR AFFECTU,
UT NIHIL IPSI UNQUAM MAGIS CORDI ESSET;
IMO
CORDIS COR, VITÆ VITA, ANIMI ANIMA SUI VIDERETUR
COR UTRINQUE POTENTISSIMUM:
IN MEDIO POSITUS, QUO ME VERTAM, INQUIT, NESCIO;
HINC FILII AMOR, HINC MATRIS AMOR.
AD ALTERUTRUM VERTI QUIDEM NESCIIT
UTRUMQUE UT AD SE VERTERETUR MODUM APTE
RESCIIT:
COR ENIM SUUM MYSTICAM CORDIS UTRIUSQUE ARCAM
FECIT.
DIVINI AMORIS FLAMMA FUIT IN TERRIS,
JAM IN CŒLIS,
UT SPERAMUS, LUCIDISSIMUM SIDUS!

"So great was his love for the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary that he seemed to care for nothing else. These two Hearts, which are one, seemed to be the Heart of his heart, the life of his life, the soul of his soul. Placed between the Heart of Jesus and that of Mary he seemed to say: 'To which shall I join myself: to the love of the

Son or to that of the Mother?' He could not go from one to the other but brought both to himself, his heart became a mysterious sanctuary for the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. On earth he was a flame of divine love. We hope he is shining as a brilliant star in Heaven."

The holy man died poor, but he possessed a treasure; he wished to bequeath it to his children. This donation is the object of two paragraphs in his will.

"With all the strength of my will, I give myself to the incomprehensible love with which my Jesus and His Holy Mother have given me Their loving Hearts in a special manner, and in union with this same love I give this Heart as a Thing that belongs to me and of which I can dispose for the glory of God. I give it, I say, to the little Congregation of Jesus and Mary, to be the portion, treasure, principal patron, heart, life and rule of this Congregation, as also I give and dedicate this Congregation to this divine Heart, to be entirely consecrated to Its praise and honour for time and for eternity, supplicating and begging of my dear Brothers to strive to render and cause to be rendered to It all possible honour, to celebrate Its feasts and Offices on the days appointed for them with all possible devotion. In their missions we would wish them to speak of this devotion and to study to imprint on their own hearts a perfect image of this very holy Heart, to look upon It and to follow It as the fundamental principle of their life, to give themselves to Jesus and Mary in all their works, performing them in the love, humility, and other virtues of Their Sacred Hearts, so that by this means they may love and glorify God with a heart according to God. *Corde magno et animo volenti* so that they may be true children of Jesus and Mary.

"I also give this precious Heart to all my dearest daughters, the religious of Our Lady of Charity, and to the Carmelites of Caen and to all my other spiritual

children, especially to those who have a particular affection for their unworthy Father and whose names are written in the Book of Life. I give them all and each one in particular to this Holy Heart for the intentions mentioned in the preceding article, and I promise them if God gives me the grace as I hope in His Mercy, and in the incomparable charity of His Holy Mother, that I will in Heaven have particular care of them, and I hope God will allow me to assist them with our Blessed Lady at the hour of their death."

CHAPTER XI

HIS WRITINGS ON THE SACRED HEART

GREAT activity, love of labour and an unchangeable constancy were united in Father Eudes with a tenderness of soul, great piety, and the recollection of an interior life. One asks how this man, really the wonder of his time, could accomplish so much, giving missions, establishing numberless good works, and yet find time to compose books as remarkable for the purity and fulness of their doctrine as by the unction of their piety.

The first pamphlet that he published on the Sacred Heart appeared at Autun in 1648 under the title of *Devotion to the Holy Heart and Name of the Blessed Virgin Mary*. The pamphlet contained the Office of the Heart of Mary. A second pamphlet was published in 1668 under the title of *Manual of Prayers and Practices of Piety*. It is full of devotion to the Sacred Heart. *The Office, Mass of the Sacred Heart*, appeared in 1676.

The Book of the Admirable Heart was only finished one month before Father Eudes' death, and was published in 1682 by his successor. Father Eudes worked at it more than twenty years. In 1663 he said in the preface of a new edition of his book, *Devotion to the Holy Heart of Mary*, that this "little book is only a sample of a greater work and the small part of a lesson, more explained, which I commenced some time ago and have a great desire to finish, if it please God to give me the means; in which work many great truths will be explained, helping you to understand the greatness of this admirable Heart."

AVE COR

(Composed by Bl. John Eudes)

Ave Cor sanctissimum.	Hail, Heart most holy.
Ave Cor mitissimum.	Hail, Heart most meek.
Ave Cor humillimum.	Hail, Heart most humble.
Ave Cor purissimum.	Hail, Heart most pure.
Ave Cor devotissimum.	Hail, Heart most devoted.
Ave Cor sapientissimum.	Hail, Heart most wise.
Ave Cor patientissimum.	Hail, Heart most patient.
Ave Cor obedientissimum.	Hail, Heart most obedient.
Ave Cor vigilantissimum.	Hail, Heart most watchful.
Ave Cor fidelissimum.	Hail, Heart most faithful.
Ave Cor beatissimum.	Hail, Heart most blessed.
Ave Cor misericordissimum.	Hail, Heart most merciful.
Ave Cor amantissimum Jesus filii Mariæ.	Hail, most loving Heart of Jesus, Son of Mary.
Te adoramus.	We adore Thee.
Te laudamus.	We praise Thee.
Te glorificamus.	We glorify Thee.
Tibi gratias agimus.	We give Thee thanks.
Te amamus.	We love Thee.
Ex toto corde nostro.	With all our heart.
Ex toto anima nostra.	With all our soul.
Et ex totis viribus nostris.	With all our strength.
Tibi cor nostrum offerimus.	To Thee we offer our hearts.
Donamus.	We give.
Consecramus.	We consecrate.
Immolamus.	We immolate.
Accipe et posside illum totum.	Accept and possess them entirely.
Et purifica.	And purify them.
Et illumina.	And enlighten them.
Et sanctifica.	And sanctify them.
Ut in ipso vivas et regnes, nunc et semper et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.	And live and reign in them, now and ever, for ages of ages. Amen.

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